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# **Speaking About Speaking About Child Sexual Abuse in Britain, 1965-1991**

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**Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**2018**

## **Declaration**

The work presented in the thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, this has been indicated within the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Basannavar', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Nicholas Ranjan Gadsby Basannavar

## **Abstract**

Focusing on three case studies between the years 1965 and 1991, this thesis explores the mutable ways in which child sexual abuse has been represented – or spoken about – in Britain, particularly in popular media forms. Drawing on historian Frank Ankersmit’s observation that historical investigation is a form of “speaking about speaking”, it paints a picture of representational, attitudinal and social change over time, clarifies definitional forms relating to childhood, attraction, and abuse, and examines the deeply historical tropes inherent in present-day inquiries into abuse.

An analysis of the Moors murders trial shows that discussions about sexual attraction to children did exist, but were often couched in heavily coded, indirect ways. By the 1970s, this was changing: ‘paedophilia’ was discussed more commonly not only in medicine and academia, which had historically been its domains, but also in the popular press and in governmental debates. I argue that it was angst about the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) that shaped subsequent cultural constructs of the ‘paedophile’ in Britain. The final case study on the Cleveland child sexual abuse crisis reveals the employment of increasingly direct terminology in the 1980s, although allusive, metonymical forms and displacements persisted and were entrenched amidst deep moral and social concern for the child. The thesis concludes by using the figure of Jimmy Savile as a means of thinking about a wider debate on the relationship between anachronism and abuse.

The study argues that historical debate about child sexual abuse needs to move further from stark notions of historical absence and silence, and towards a heightened awareness of historical ‘speaking’, in all its complex narrative forms.

## Acknowledgements

My first thanks must go to Birkbeck, an institution that I love and admire. The School of History, Classics and Archaeology generously awarded me a scholarship that made this research possible. After some difficulties of ‘framing’ in the opening months, my upgrade panel of Joanna Bourke and Julia Laite helped me to take the right steps on the journey to representational enlightenment. Joanna and Sean Brady were exemplary teaching guides whilst I acted as an Associate Tutor in 2014-15. Janet Weston and Vicky Russell were supportive fellow tutors, and those in my seminar group the ideal students: challenging, engaged, fun, and just occasionally tipsy. Thanks also to Jana Comfort and Sian Green for their kind and professional course management. Giacomo Giudici was the best PhD drinking partner I could have wished for. The wonderful Jerry White has been a well of support and wisdom, and without his encouragement at critical moments, I doubt that I would have had the gumption to reach this stage.

The Loudoun Trust is an important body that I have been fortunate enough to contribute to in the last couple of years. Carine Minne, Rob Hale, Peter Timms, David Millar and Peter Hill deserve great credit for their determined work on the prevention of child sexual abuse. They have all read my drafts and offered insightful and encouraging responses during this journey. I must also thank Justin Bengry, Gill Frank, George Rousseau and Laurence Brockliss for giving my research a platform over the years. A snatched ten-minute chat with Stephen Fry (during which we recited the opening lines of *Lolita* to each other) gave the project a strange but compelling impetus at a key moment. Kind financial support was forthcoming from both the Sidney Perry Foundation and the Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clark Charitable Trust, to whom I offer deep gratitude. To those at my ‘other’ office, I thank Jun and Traian in particular for allowing me the space and time to complete this work. Thank you also to the staff at Senate House and the British Library (especially those at the former newspaper site at Colindale, who helped me unravel untold metres of microfilm).

When I announced my decision to embark on this PhD, there were some raised eyebrows among friends and family members. Some of those eyebrows remain firmly raised. Those closest to me are vivacious, warm, cynical, generous, wise, and unutterably silly. They have endured (or maybe enjoyed) six years of my grumbling and soul-searching, offering their jokes, their advice, and their time. So to Mudi, Lee, Nick, Theo, Lena, the guys at UBL (Adnan, Atul, James, Olly C, Will B, Will L, and particularly Ed, who spotted *that* italicisation error in one of my footnotes), Rupert, Jack, George, Olly E, Woody, Sally, and all the rest who have been there, and made me laugh when laughing seemed impossible.

To Jill, who took the time to read and comment on this thesis, as well as to offer moral support throughout; to Mum, who has helped in so many ways that a doctorate would be needed to document them; to Edie, John, Gladys, Jun, Toby, Rika and Chris, from 46 to 103, from London to Tokyo; to Yuko, that most extraordinary person who stayed next to me with patience and love whilst I toiled with this thing: thank you.

Almost there. In 2012, I walked into a meeting in a vegetarian restaurant in the Brighton Lanes. Ever since, the man I met there has been mentor, critic, 'power breakfast' partner, therapist, and friend. He has been Matt Cook, and this simply wouldn't have gone anywhere without him.

I turn from all of these special people, and reach out, and can almost touch the hand of Rangappa Mallappa Basannavar. This thesis is dedicated to him.

London, August 2018

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## Introduction

### Speaking About Speaking About Child Sexual Abuse

#### The Project

This thesis investigates the mutable ways in which child sexual abuse has been represented in the postwar period in Britain, particularly in the written press and other popular media forms. In historical scholarly work, there has been a tendency to argue that concepts such as ‘child sexual abuse’ and ‘paedophilia’ were ‘discovered and constructed in the late 1970s’.<sup>1</sup> We also hear that moral attitudes were somehow looser or more accepting in prior decades, or that there was a lack of knowledge about abuse, or even that there was some kind of national ‘conspiracy’ that led to silence.<sup>2</sup> My project challenges problematic dichotomies such as silence and noise, ignorance and knowledge, and shows that although *categories* such as ‘child sexual abuse’ and ‘paedophilia’ may be relatively recent value-constructs, adult attraction to, sex with and sexual abuse of children has been discussed and represented throughout history, in highly complex and changeable ways. I have chosen three case studies, located between 1965 and 1991, to show how the press, wider media and other groups assembled and animated narratives around these issues. I situate each case study within a longer story of changing representations. This periodisation captures significant representational moments. It also ends just short of the mass adoption of online technology. This was a conscious decision that recognises the further dramatic shifts in sexual activity, crime, and language that have arrived with the Internet, as well as the large body of scholarly work that exists on those complicated movements.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This tendency has been highlighted and critiqued by Louise Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.

<sup>2</sup> See, for a précis of these arguments, discussion of Jimmy Savile in Andrew O’Hagan, ‘Light Entertainment’, *London Review of Books* 34, no. 21 (8 November 2012), 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Howitt and Sheldon, *Sex Offenders and the Internet*; Quayle and Taylor, *Child Pornography*; Anne-Marie McAlinden, *‘Grooming’ and the Sexual Abuse of Children: Institutional, Internet, and Familial Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Philip Jenkins, *Beyond Tolerance: Child Pornography on the Internet* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); CJP Lee, *Pervasive Perversions: Paedophilia and Child Sexual Abuse in Media/Culture* (London: Free Association Books, 2005).

The title of this thesis is drawn from philosopher of history Frank Ankersmit's belief that 'historical text ... is a "speaking about speaking"', and acknowledges the two primary forms of representation in this thesis: my own, and that inherent in the sources I analyse.<sup>4</sup> There are three major aims within this representational approach. First, this is a diachronic project, being concerned with the ways that the languages of child sexual abuse have evolved over time. I seek to construct a narrative historical framework for those languages in Britain over the period in question, and in doing so to unpick daunting definitional and thematic complexities. Rather than diaries, interviews, letters and experiential documentation, I have mainly selected as sources media outlets and spaces of rhetoric: newspapers, periodicals, television and radio broadcasts. It is through these that I document representational movements. Second, and through this linguistic analysis, I engage with more structural historical questions of how far, how and why social and cultural perspectives on child sexual abuse have changed in Britain over a longer period. The majority of scholarly works on child sexual abuse lie under the arches of criminology, sociology and clinical studies, but in recent years historicisation of this issue has developed significantly.<sup>5</sup> I build on this and draw out major and often correlational shifts in sexual, moral, legal and medical attitudes. Third, this project encourages further thought about the intersections of abuse, anachronism, and historical method. Current discussions about child sexual abuse are invariably conversations with the *past*. The thesis explores the well-publicised ways in which historic child sexual crimes, once ignored, are now being investigated and explored in legal, criminal and media spheres in Britain. These investigations chime with the historian's theoretical concern, namely in talking about the past through the subjectivities and values of the present.

I could not predict, when proposing this research project in 2011, the extent of subsequent representational change around sexuality and consent. Recent revelations about abusive sexual behaviour in entertainment, sport and other high-profile industries have elicited open national reflections on sexual

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<sup>4</sup> In other words, I am the one 'doing' the speaking about speaking. Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 79.

<sup>5</sup> An important recent example is the *History and Policy* series on historical child sexual abuse (<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/projects/project/historical-child-sex-abuse>).

abuse and the nature of trust.<sup>6</sup> Such reflections – whether in political, academic or legal spheres – are inherently historical, looking back as they do on past events in order to reveal criminal behaviour or other injustices, or to inform proposed future changes in policy and safeguarding. These have been crystallised in the UK in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), an investigatory body looking into historic structural failings, as well as a series of other police and institutional inquests.<sup>7</sup> Jimmy Savile, as I consider in the conclusion to this thesis, makes for a telling example in any exploration of attitudes towards abuse in Britain. He evaded prison throughout his lifetime, with his crimes being discovered in full only after his death. Reports suggest that he sexually abused hundreds of children and young people over a period of several decades.<sup>8</sup> Many of these victims, as patients in hospitals, were particularly vulnerable. A total of 44 National Health Service (NHS) institutions have formally investigated and published reports on the damage caused.<sup>9</sup> That it has taken until recent years for the enormous weight of allegations and

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<sup>6</sup> The most widely documented has been the series of allegations against television entertainer Jimmy Savile, following his death in 2011. More recently, allegations surrounding the sexual abuse of young footballers at clubs across the country saw former scout and coach Barry Bennell sentenced to 454 years in prison (to run concurrently over 30 years) in 2018 for hundreds of sexual offences against former players. See for background Daniel Taylor, 'One Year after Football's Child Abuse Scandal Broke, Stories Are yet to Be Told', *The Guardian*, 11 November 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/nov/11/andy-woodward-one-year-on>.

Meanwhile, the '#metoo' movement, sparked initially by allegations against US film producer Harvey Weinstein, has marked a cultural shift in the way that sexual harassment and exploitation is discussed in the Anglosphere.

<sup>7</sup> See: the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, which opened in March 2015 (<https://www.iicsa.org.uk>) and has as of July 2018 launched thirteen investigatory pathways on topics such as the Internet, Lambeth Council, and Children in Custodial Institutions; a series of police investigations such as Operation Yewtree (2012-) and associated report *Giving Victims a Voice* (2013), Operation Ravine (2014-) and Operation Hydrant (2014-) which looked particularly at alleged abuse by celebrity individuals; ongoing investigations into alleged sexual abuse since the 1980s in Rotherham (see for instance Operation Clover, 2015-); internal BBC investigations into the historic alleged misconduct of its performers; the Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (2014-16) that looked at alleged abuse in churches, childcare centres and schools; Operation Fairbank (2012-13), Operation Fernbridge (2013-15) and Operation Midland (2014-16) that looked at alleged paedophilic offences and homicide in London at locations such as Dolphin Square in Pimlico and Elm Guest House in Barnes; and historical academic work such as the project on 'Historical child sex abuse' (History and Policy).

<sup>8</sup> Josh Halliday, 'Jimmy Savile: Timeline of His Sexual Abuse and Its Uncovering', *The Guardian*, 26 June 2014, sec. UK news, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jun/26/jimmy-savile-sexual-abuse-timeline>.

<sup>9</sup> Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden, 'Themes and Lessons Learnt from NHS Investigations into Matters Relating to Jimmy Savile', Independent report for the Secretary of State for Health, February 2015.

evidence against Savile and others to come into wide public knowledge suggests a change in the ways that such crimes have been reported, handled by officials, and discussed. The Savile scandal captures in microcosm the representational justification for applying an historical lens to child sexual abuse. Adult sex with children has always existed. However, the ways in which it has been discussed have changed over time. These discursive shifts are the focus of this thesis.

This introduction establishes the terms of the project. It opens with a comment on terminological selection, acknowledging the linguistic complexities inherent in a representational analysis of this kind. It then introduces the thesis structure, chapters, and key themes, including précis of the three case studies at the heart of the project: the Moors murders trial (1966), the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) (1974-1981), and the Cleveland child sexual abuse crisis (1987). Following an overview of my methodological and ethical approach, I consider theoretical perspectives on representation, including the challenges involved in interpreting media-based documentation, as well as more general challenges relating to representation and history. I close the chapter with a reflection on the project's contribution to existing work – both in the field of the history of sexuality, and in historical writing more broadly drawn. Throughout this introduction I make reference to scholarship that has informed and influenced the work and my thinking.

## **Terminology**

I use 'child sexual abuse' as a term to describe adult sex with children, reflecting my own view that adult sex with children is an inherently abusive matter.<sup>10</sup> I recognise that this is not a perfect lexical choice. First, use of a term containing the word 'abuse' cannot be 'value-free'. Second, whilst the thesis title refers only to 'child sexual abuse', in reality the project explores a host of issues around this, such as child sexual murder, attraction, incest, and so on. I therefore distinguish between these throughout. Third, although Louise Jackson has

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<sup>10</sup> I indeed considered the use of the phrase 'adult sex with children', which is ostensibly more neutral and descriptive. The word 'abuse' is partial, and as my second case study on the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) shows, there have been groups that have argued that not all adult sex with children is abusive.

stated that even Victorians would ‘certainly’ have recognised the term ‘child sexual abuse’, my research shows that it did not attain popular usage until the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> This means that unthinking deployment of it in relation to my first case study on the Moors murders of the 1960s, to take one example, would be anachronistic. Similarly, when discussing adult sexual *attraction* to children, I tend to use the term ‘paedophilia’ even though this was a little-used term outside of quite particular medical and academic milieus until the 1970s. My use of these terms throughout the thesis is largely pragmatic. I do not wish to imply, in referring to ‘paedophilia’ and ‘paedophile’ for instance, that I accept these terms as wholly normative descriptive classifications, because what my project in fact shows is that they are historically specific constructs. My application of inverted commas therefore serves as a sign of scepticism, when I think that such scepticism needs reasserting. It is indeed one of the major purposes of this thesis to throw light on the ways that such language has been adopted, developed, and become hegemonic over time, and to highlight the danger of anachronism in historical debates about sexual violence.

‘Paedophilia’ and ‘child sexual abuse’ are often used interchangeably in media channels.<sup>12</sup> However, a few key distinctions need to be made between the two. Prominent medical bodies give paedophilia the status of a mental disorder.<sup>13</sup> Child sexual abuse, on the other hand, is a criminally recognised *act*.<sup>14</sup> Not all child sexual abuse is carried out by paedophiles. The inverse is also true: not all paedophiles commit child sexual abuse. In the UK there has never been a legal provision for sexual *desire* for children (paedophilia). Various iterations of the *Sexual Offences Act* up until 2003, on the other hand, reveal

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<sup>11</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> See, for examples of this discussion, Philip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 72-73; Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 8-11; Jon Silverman and David Wilson, *Innocence Betrayed: Paedophilia, the Media and Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 29-46; Alyson Brown and David Barrett, *Knowledge of Evil: Child Prostitution and Child Sexual Abuse in Twentieth-Century England* (Cullompton: Willan, 2002), 2-7; Adrian Bingham et al., ‘Historical Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: The Role of Historians’, *History of Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 411-29.

<sup>13</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*, Fifth Edition (Arlington, Virginia: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 302.2.

<sup>14</sup> See various legislative iterations up to ‘Sexual Offences Act 2003’, Text, accessed 1 August 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>. See also parliamentary exchange on the topic and comment by Lord Williams of Mostyn, ‘House of Lords Hansard Deb, 14 Oct 1997: Column WA113’, 14 October 1997.

legal developments regarding the sexual abuse of children.<sup>15</sup> This has changed over time to include not only physical abuse but also to account for offences relating to the way pornography is created and consumed, most notably via the Internet.<sup>16</sup> Clearly there are important differences, with paedophilia best viewed, at root, as an individual *condition*, and child sexual abuse a transgressive *act*. In governmental, academic and media language there has recently been an increase in use of the term ‘child sexual exploitation’, which officially entered British social care policy in 2009.<sup>17</sup> ‘Child sexual exploitation’ is governmentally defined as a type (or subset) of child sexual abuse in which an ‘individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity’, usually in *exchange* for something the victim wants or needs.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the thesis I also refer to ‘child sexual crime’ as a collective term when discussing matters related to a specific criminal case or cases. As this is a thesis that deals with language, I have sought to be mindful of these terminologies, deploying them carefully – though inevitably some anachronistic slips of my own may remain.

## Structure and Key Themes

If we think of the project like a tree, this introduction is the roots – the methodological and theoretical foundations that inform the entire work. The next contextual chapter is the trunk, representing broader historiographical and

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Sexual Offences Act 1956’, Text, accessed 2 August 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/4-5/69/contents>; ‘Sexual Offences Act 1967’, Text, accessed 2 August 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/60/contents>; ‘Sexual Offences (Protected Material) Act 1997’, Text, accessed 2 August 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/39/contents>; ‘Sexual Offences Act 2003’.

<sup>16</sup> See, for examples of discussions on child pornography and the Internet, Ethel Quayle and Max Taylor, *Child Pornography: An Internet Crime* (East Sussex: Routledge, 2004); Dennis Howitt and Kerry Sheldon, *Sex Offenders and the Internet* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2009); Alisdair A. Gillespie, ‘Indecent Images of Children: The Ever-Changing Law’, *Child Abuse Review* 14, no. 6 (1 November 2005): 430–43.

<sup>17</sup> Sophie Hallett, *Making Sense of Child Sexual Exploitation: Exchange, Abuse and Young People* (London: Policy Press, 2017), 1.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and a Guide for Practitioners, Local Leaders and Decision Makers Working to Protect Children from Child Sexual Exploitation’ (Department for Education, February 2017), 5.

thematic considerations that in turn support the three case studies. Those case studies are the three major branches, positioned firmly within their own historical moments, but all part of one overarching representational story.

The contextual chapter sets out critical historical, legal, medical, sociological and cultural definitional contexts. It argues that there is a much longer history to narratives of child sexual abuse than is often imagined today, and signals towards examples from the ancient world, sexological theory, Freudian psychoanalysis, and scandals in Victorian Britain that bear this out. The chapter explores central axioms relating to a) paedophilia, b) child sexual abuse, c) the abuser, and d) the child through a detailed interdisciplinary literature review. These four issues are tightly bound together in any discussion of child sexual abuse, but my aim is not to unify them in crafting definitions of my own. Rather, I highlight and document definitional and representational temporality – the means by which ways of speaking about those four issues have changed over time, and the lack of consensus involved. Despite high levels of recent academic and other interest in child sexual abuse, there has been a real struggle over time for consistent, lasting approaches. This is borne out when we examine specific abuse cases that lie in a curious temporal, legal and historical flux, occurring as they did in the past, but being discovered or disclosed in the present. Attitudes and definitions have varied according to era and discipline.<sup>19</sup> Such definitional diversity, I argue, relates to social context as much as to interdisciplinary difference. This is problematic. Without a foundation for understanding the ways that childhood has been understood, for example, it is a difficult task to identify and define the nature of sexual transgressions against children. The chapter is intended to work as a stand-alone contribution to extant work on these complex definitional areas, but it also linguistically and thematically informs my three case studies. Moreover, assembling these definitional frameworks is a necessarily formulative process ahead of engaging with specific cases.

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<sup>19</sup> This point will be elaborated fully in the contextual chapter, but an example is the clinical and medical sphere and the various and changing iterations of the American Psychiatric Association's definition of 'pedophilia' (paedophilia) since the 1950s, and the World Health Organization's definition within the Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders.

My first case study looks at media and court coverage of the 'Moors murders' trial of 1966. At the heart of the chapter is a relatively simple question: using the Moors trial as a lens, how did journalists and courtroom professionals speak about 'child sexual abuse' or 'paedophilia' in the 1960s, if indeed such specific terminology was either not available or not utilised? The chapter begins with a survey of media and sexual culture in the period that asks to what extent this was a nation vacillating between conservative values and permissiveness. It queries whether press and legislatures were able to directly tackle the nature and acts of child sexual crime by 'Moors murderers' Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, and documents the ways that certain media outlets in the period played on divergent interests in sexuality and deviancy such as sadism and Satanism to report on horrifying crimes. The case study also reads around the trial and explores the way that commentators banked on established, recognisable and understandable social problems (such as homosexuality or promiscuity) to relay their messages. Could 'metonymical' language serve to represent the acts in a more familiar and palatable fashion for readers and observers? The geography and spaces of the Moors case resonated with a public attuned to grisly fictional tales and a 'Ripper' revival, with the press in particular making much of the nature of the moorland where Brady and Myra Hindley's victims were buried. Journalists connected the desolation of the Moors with the deviancy of the crimes: somehow inhuman or unearthly. The chapter draws on comparative child kidnap and murder cases from the period to explore thematic similarity and difference. An epilogue briefly explores the representational legacy of the Moors case. Given the very high-profile nature of the case and its prominent position in the collective British criminal memory, I have been able to draw on a wide source base from media, governmental and legal spheres.

In selecting the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) as the second case study, the project moves into the 1970s and the increasingly overt politicisation of sex and personal morality. Building on the representational bodywork of the Moors case study, the chapter primarily questions how the press – and political bodies – reacted to and played a part in emerging concerns about sexual attraction to children, and reveals significant changes from the



1960s. Exploring the sexual and social landscape in that decade, the chapter shows how PIE piggybacked on burgeoning liberationist sexual rights movements to promote its campaign for the abolition of the age of consent. Using as sources the organisation's official output, writings of PIE members such as Tom O'Carroll, as well as media depictions of the group between 1974 and 1981, I probe the discursive significance of the group's self-application of the term 'paedophile'. Through close readings of press reporting, I question suggestions that there was a sympathetic popular contemporary reaction to PIE's claims and ambitions. The chapter also asks if and how the PIE affair contributed to troubling and recurring representational associations made between homosexuality and paedophilia in the popular media. An epilogue touches on recent revelations regarding British politicians' alleged support of PIE during its most active years.

The third and final case study looks at the Cleveland child sexual abuse episode of 1987, which saw more than 100 young children taken into social care in the North East following doctors' concerns that they were being sexually abused. Cleveland and the reaction to it seemed to encapsulate many critical themes of 1980s Britain, including increasing concern over the supposedly disintegrating (nuclear) family, welfare, poverty and inequality, and the child. Through analysis of output from (heavily campaigning) North East press bodies, as well as national publications and parliamentary debates and reports, the case study asks how child sexual abuse was spoken about during a fraught period. In doing so, it points out many of the forces behind social change (and entrenchments) in Britain during the 1980s. I particularly probe the concept of 'responsibility' for children and, connectedly, for abuse. Given that abuse was starting, by the late 1980s, to be understood as broadly a domestic (rather than 'street') matter, a recurring question at the time was who, ultimately, should be responsible for the child's welfare.<sup>20</sup> I lean on some striking television broadcast moments to reveal how this dilemma was popularly explored and represented. For comparative context the chapter looks to other contemporary cases with similar 'narrative' elements, most notably child abuse inquiries at Rochdale

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<sup>20</sup> See for examples of 1980s statistical data Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research*, 3-5; Russell, *The Secret Trauma*.

(1990) and Orkney (1991). These both contained tropes (particularly Satanism, ritual, and the 'unknown') that echo those from the 1960s. In commenting on Cleveland I wrap up some of the standout representational connections and trends that have appeared throughout the three case studies. The chapter additionally takes slightly different trajectories to the other two case studies, particularly in discussing wider, complex social and political changes relating to family, childhood and sexuality.

The conclusion sums up key findings from each case study, and stitches these together into broader observations on representations of and perspectives on child sexual abuse – in particular challenging notions of 'ignorance' and 'silence' in the historical record. It considers how far the project succeeds in its aims as outlined in this introduction. It also explores apparent parallels between the nature of recent reporting of child sexual abuse and the nature of historical inquiry, and argues that both should be highly aware of anachronistic approaches. Using Jimmy Savile as an example, it highlights the ways in which historical cases now being investigated bring to the fore issues of anachronism, with key players from judicial, police and governmental bodies (often unconsciously) projecting their own values onto the past. This is not theoretically dissimilar to the ways in which historians operate. I argue that those involved in these endeavours are likely to benefit from historical perspectives on abuse, particularly those that promote further appreciation of historical 'speaking', rather than rigid notions of historical absences or silences. I note in the conclusion that without latter-day disclosures of abuse, this project would have been very different. The thesis ends with an epilogue that reflects, personally, on the 'doing' of the project.

## **Research Methodology and Ethics**

What kind of history is this? In an edited volume from 1992, sociologists Charles Ragin and Howard Becker explored the question of the characteristics of 'cases', concluding that researchers use multiple different definitions and selection

criteria in using case studies, which tend to be either empirical or theoretical.<sup>21</sup> According to Lauren Berlant, introducing a special issue on case study methodology for *Critical Inquiry*, a case is ‘an event that takes place in a variety of institutional, disciplinary, and ordinary-life contexts that are shaped by the practice or expression of expertise’.<sup>22</sup> Berlant comes from a largely sociological, rather than historical, standpoint. Nonetheless this is a good starting point that accepts a case study’s ‘rich potential ... for understanding human life’ – whether historically or in the present day.<sup>23</sup> What, though, marks out the *case* from any other ‘event’? Berlant says the following:

One might say that a case is what an event can become. Usually, when an event happens there are no outcomes; it fades into the ordinary pulsations of living on undramatically, perhaps in memory, without being memorable. When an event occurs out of which a case is constructed, it represents a situation in which people are compelled to take its history, seek out precedent, write its narratives, adjudicate claims about it, make a judgment, and file it somewhere: a sick body, a traffic accident, a phenomenon, instance, or detail that captures the interpretive eye.<sup>24</sup>

Berlant is describing any event that is inherently worthy as an historical topic. This is a problematic issue for the historian as it raises the prospect of elevating certain events above others. There is nothing inherently noteworthy about an event itself. Events themselves are just events; what makes them ‘cases’ is the marked way in which they are elevated and represented by contemporary individuals and groups (and by later historians) – all of which also contains an element of chance.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Charles C. Ragin and Howard Saul Becker, eds., *What Is a Case?: Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Lauren Berlant, ‘Introduction: What Does It Matter Who One Is?’, *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 1 (1 September 2007): 1.

<sup>23</sup> Lauren Berlant, ‘On the Case’, *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 4 (1 June 2007): 668.

<sup>24</sup> Berlant, 670.

<sup>25</sup> See, for insightful recent contributions to theories of the case (with particular focuses on sexology and psychiatry) Joy Damousi, Birgit Lang, and Katie Sutton, *Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2015); Birgit Lang, Joy Damousi, and Alison Lewis, *A History of the Case Study: Sexology, Psychoanalysis, Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

Case study selection is a major challenge: ‘what if history had been organized around this kind of person rather than that kind?’ Berlant gives the example of E.P. Thompson’s writing and points out the choices he made, between writing about the servant class or the industrial labourer; the domestic rather than the industrial setting.<sup>26</sup> Each historian must make these decisions when selecting their cases and sources. Why do my case studies represent more than just Berlant’s ‘events’? Or indeed, *does* a case study have to be more than that? In selecting my case studies for this project, I have faced two major considerations: first, if we take Berlant’s definition, is my chosen case more than a mere event? And second, is it more than illustrative, representationally rich; more than a ‘merely gestural instance, illustration or example’?<sup>27</sup> In the case of my chosen focus areas, the answer to the first quandary is certainly yes: the Moors murders, the PIE affair and the Cleveland crisis certainly captured Berlant’s concept of the ‘interpretive eye’, becoming highly memorable and being judged by various groups. I document this through my media and governmental source analyses. In each chapter I explore the way in which media outlets tend to pick up on stories and magnify them – turning events into cases. Sometimes this is pure chance, a slow news day or a story that resonates unexpectedly strongly with the audience.

With my second consideration (going beyond mere illustration), there are some clear theoretical challenges. As explored in the next section on representation, it is not a given that historical cases can ever provide more than mere illustration or example. It is also not clear that judgements or conclusions about a wider historical context or moment may be drawn from a single case. The value to the approach, however, lies in the making of connections between the case and its wider context. In the example of the Moors murders, a reading of the media and court sources is ‘interesting’ (and ‘illustrative’) as far as it goes, but little understanding of attitudes to child sexual crime (if discovery of that is the aim) can be drawn without a wider appreciation of the sexual, criminal and cultural contexts of mid-1960s Britain (and ‘the North’ in particular); this is what I also seek to provide. In a historical setting, a case study which seeks to

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<sup>26</sup> Berlant, ‘Introduction’, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Berlant, 666.

serve broader aims, and answer bigger questions, is only as good as its analysis of a wider context (unless the aim of the exercise is to restrict analysis purely to the case itself, which is of course also a valid form of historical expression). This becomes more challenging when – as is the case in my project – the cases span different periods, geographies and categories (the context to the Moors murders is different to that of the Cleveland episode, or the more recent atmosphere in which historical investigations have been launched into alleged child sexual offences). Indeed, documenting these contextual differences is one of the major points of this project.

Debates over the merits of microhistory have been helpful to me in crafting my research approach.<sup>28</sup> Microhistory can be seen as histories constructed from sources focused on individuals, their families, individual documents and a ‘smaller’ or local world; this lies in distinction to macrohistory which uses public source documents and draws wider communities and far-reaching conclusions.<sup>29</sup> Or, as Emma Rothschild has put it in her exploration of empire, it is ‘a distinction between the inner and the outer life, or between an interior, private existence of the mind and an exterior universe of events and circumstances’.<sup>30</sup> The advantage to the microhistorical approach, in Carlo Ginzburg’s words, is that ‘a close-up look permits us to grasp what eludes a comprehensive viewing, and vice versa’.<sup>31</sup> More than this, fellow microhistorical pioneer Giovanni Levi argues, microhistory done well should ‘refute relativism, irrationalism, and the reduction of the historian’s work to a purely rhetorical activity which interprets texts and not events themselves’.<sup>32</sup> This perspective has influenced my own approach. I have thought hard about the extent to which this should be a purely rhetorical thesis – focusing purely on the spoken or written word. Feeling that it should address representation but also go beyond

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<sup>28</sup> Albeit I would not brand my case studies ‘microhistories’, as they have wider focuses.

<sup>29</sup> See, for discussions on microhistory and microhistorical method, Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe: Selections from Quaderni Storici* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Minutiae, Close-up, Microanalysis’, *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 1 (1 September 2007): 174–89; Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szigjártó, *What Is Microhistory* (Routledge, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi, ‘Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It’, *Critical Inquiry* 20. 1 (1993): 26.

<sup>32</sup> Giovanni Levi, ‘On Microhistory’, in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 95.

that, I have set out to ask structural and causative historical questions about both the specific moments I cover and the *longue durée*. With each case I draw connections between the localised events and their wider context. And as the case studies cover several decades, I engage with the question of change over time in the way that child sexual abuse has been represented and considered. In these ways, the case studies (and the thesis as a whole) consider context, text, event, and result. I aim for the outcome to share elements with successful microhistory, defined by scholars such as Liz Stanley as recognising the interconnectedness between micro and macro.<sup>33</sup>

Historian Jonathan Blaney has commented, somewhat world-wearily, that ‘almost all historians of language use purely qualitative approaches (i.e. manual reading) and are unfamiliar even with basic word-counting’. It seems to have become received wisdom that ‘research methods have all but disappeared’ in historiography, particularly when compared to more data-driven disciplines such as sociology or anthropology. Instead, histories are ‘stories we tell about ourselves’.<sup>34</sup> Or, alternatively, ‘stories we tell about our prior selves or that others tell about us’.<sup>35</sup> I have been keenly aware of these debates whilst crafting this thesis. Much of my analysis *is* rhetorical in that it leans heavily on somewhat intangible representational forms, seeking out meaning and perspective in the linguistic tone, weight and impact of popular media output rather than in numbers, statistics and data. Yet this is in places a quantitative thesis, too. To return to Blaney’s concept of word counting, I have built quantitative records for key linguistic terms in different historical moments (most notably ‘paedophilia’ and ‘child sexual abuse’). This is drawn out via surveys of newspaper records, both digital and manual. I have used digital newspaper archives (from titles such as *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *Daily Mail*) to seek out occurrence data for the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ for the purposes of each case study. For the third case study on Cleveland, where I was

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<sup>33</sup> Liz Stanley, Andrea Salter, and Helen Dampier, ‘Olive Schreiner, Epistolary Practices and Microhistories: A Cultural Entrepreneur in a Historical Landscape’, *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 4 (1 December 2013): 580.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Lucy Faire and Simon Gunn, ‘Introduction: Why Bother with Method?’, in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Lucy Faire (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1.

<sup>35</sup> Martha C. Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1.

processing newspaper records largely from undigitised local presses, I conducted manual word occurrence exercises. I have also performed ‘appearance’ analyses that look, to take one example, at the percentage regularity of the Cleveland episode’s front-page appearances across various local and national titles during the summer of 1987. This thesis does, then, use a combination of research styles, but the focus is largely linguistic. This is, I feel, necessarily so, given that it is dealing with a topic – child sexual abuse – that has so often been imprecisely and euphemistically represented. Rhetorical analysis allows for nuanced reading in a way that hard data analysis does not. On a procedural level, the engine of my research has been a digital bibliographic database that has stored all reference data as well as PDF copies of scholarly articles and newspaper reporting.<sup>36</sup> Physically, research has been conducted in large part at the British Library and university libraries in London, both for secondary and primary reading.<sup>37</sup> However, given recent digitisation projects by many research institutions, I have also accessed critical materials remotely.<sup>38</sup>

Given the obvious sensitivity of this project’s subject matter, I have reflected carefully on research ethics, consulting with relevant bodies on ethical matters where appropriate.<sup>39</sup> Different institutions and scholars hold their own views on what constitutes ethical research, depending on location, discipline, subject matter and – significantly for this thesis – era.<sup>40</sup> There is no doubt that ‘ethical (as well as legal) frameworks ... have changed across time’, creating

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<sup>36</sup> This is Zotero, which I have used since the outset of my research in 2012.

<sup>37</sup> I have accessed restricted materials (particularly related to PIE) at the main Kings Cross British Library site and at the London School of Economics library, and newspaper records at both Colindale and then later at the new Kings Cross ‘Newsroom’.

<sup>38</sup> Examples of digital databases and archives used: aforementioned digitised newspaper archives for national titles, the *London Review of Books* archive, JSTOR (journal articles), BFI Screenonline, British Universities Film and Video Council: Learning on Screen (radio, television and film clips), Hansard (parliamentary discussions, papers and legislation), Data.gov.uk (public statistical data), the Mass Observation Archive, British Social Attitudes archive, and the Margaret Thatcher Foundation.

<sup>39</sup> This includes consultation with members of Birkbeck’s Research Ethics Committee.

<sup>40</sup> See, for examples that I have drawn on, ‘Ethical Guidelines’ (Social Research Association, December 2003); ‘Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research’ (British Education Research Association, 2011); Debra Allnock and Rebecca Barns, ‘Researching Sexual Abuse: Methodological Issues’, *Child Abuse Review* 20, no. 3 (15 June 2011): 153–57; Matt Barnard, Nick Drey, and Caroline Bryson, ‘NSPCC Research Ethics Committee: Guidance for Applicants’ (NSPCC, 12 November 2012); Barnard, Drey, and Bryson; Lisa Bostock and Sophie Laws, ‘Framework for Research Ethics’ (Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, June 2017).

complexities for historical research into child sexual abuse in the present day.<sup>41</sup> I have, nonetheless, encountered areas of ethical common ground that inform my approach. One of these is a desire, when conducting and publishing research, not to cause harm to participants or subjects of the research (including the researcher). Another is an awareness of memory, and the need to be sensitive to the fact that what is written today about past events may well be remembered or experienced in an adverse way. A key concept in this is 'naming'. In an important 2016 article, the *History and Policy* working group on historical child sexual abuse noted that their 'research has been conducted at a point where competing claims circulate regarding the right to privacy (until point of conviction) and the duty to name (to prevent further cover-up and to enable witnesses to come forward).'<sup>42</sup> As a rule, I have tended towards anonymising the 'historical child' in my case studies, with two forms of exception: 1) where the case in question is now posthumous and has become well-known and widely discussed in public forums and 2) where the case is now posthumous and has become a matter of official public record either through legal proceedings or through an eponymous inquiry.<sup>43</sup> As Bingham et al. have commented, using the Moors murders case as an example, 'it is unfortunately the case that children have died as a result of abuse that may have been sexually motivated and their names are already a matter of public record', leading to difficulties in *not* naming them.<sup>44</sup> As for the 'historical abuser', I have taken a corresponding approach: where individuals have been convicted and names are a clear matter of public record (posthumously or not), I name them. Where this is not the case, I do not. One exception to this is Jimmy Savile, who died in 2011 without being prosecuted, and has since been the subject of an extraordinary level of popular debate – something I scrutinise in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>41</sup> Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse', 423.

<sup>42</sup> 2018 has seen a general increase in discussions on privacy, particularly with the onset of the EU's General Data Privacy Regulations (GDPR, May 2018) and coverage of Facebook's alleged role in the sharing of private information for political purposes. Quotation from Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse', 425.

<sup>43</sup> An example of a significant eponymous inquiry is the Jasmine Beckford case (1985) that I discuss in the third case study, having as it did an impact on the operational makeup of Cleveland social services.

<sup>44</sup> Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse', 424.



Where individuals have been accused of abuse and are currently undergoing due legal process (as some well-known individuals in the entertainment industry are), I do not name them, even though they may have been widely named in the British presses previously. At other times I have had to be more discerning because moral and legal boundaries blur, particularly when looking at the past. Take the example of a newspaper clipping featuring two girls, aged 15 in 1987, approached by Jimmy Savile and asked by him if they were models. I found this piece whilst researching local presses for the Cleveland case study and, whilst the girls are named in the original article, and although there is no indication that any specific crime was in question, I have opted to redact names. This decision is largely borne out of the previously stated ethical mandate to avoid causing potential harm to any research subjects. In a more extreme case, I encountered suggestive – though non-explicit – pictures of a well-known child actor when researching restricted 1970s official PIE materials in the British Library. I do not name the (then-child) in my analysis.

I have opted not to conduct interviews or oral history practices in this project. I do not interview children (victims or otherwise) or adults (offenders or otherwise) for research purposes. Much recently released ethical guidance on this matter, of which a selection is cited above, is deeply concerned with this kind of human interaction with research ‘participants’, but this is not something present here given my representational focus. Instead, my ethical considerations are broadly ‘distant’ historical ones and, much like the linguistic concerns at the heart of this thesis, have anachronistic concerns attached.

## **The Value of Representation**

I have stated that this is a project about representations of child sexual abuse. But what is representation, and what does it do? In short, it is the instrument with which meaning – and understanding – is dispersed. Throughout this project I discuss depictions of and reactions to child sexual abuse that have already been constructed by historians and scholars from other disciplines (and which are discussed more fully in the contextual chapter), and the

representations in contemporaneous media (and other) sources that act as the centre of each of my case studies. But I also consider the challenges and reflexivity of historical representation itself – in general, in relation to child sexual abuse, and for me personally. The cultural critic Stuart Hall wrote that ‘representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people’.<sup>45</sup> Historian Judith Walkowitz provides the logical extension to this, classing it as the ‘rhetorical, linguistic means by which “people represent and understand their world”’.<sup>46</sup> Hall introduced three theories of representation. The ‘reflective’ theory states that meaning lies inherently in the ‘object, person, idea or event in the real world’ (in the context of this thesis a paedophilic act, for example, or a child sexual murder), and that representations of it are simply mimetic (i.e. they ‘imitate’ the events as far as possible). In the ‘intentional’ theory, ‘words mean what the author intends they should mean’, meaning the author holds the power of imposing meaning through language. ‘Constructivist’ holds that meaning is produced only through the construction of language itself: ‘things don't *mean* ... It is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts’ which conveys meaning.<sup>47</sup> In completing this project I found myself drawn increasingly to this latter category. As Simon Watney has said, ‘representation is not merely a reflection of "real life", but an integral part of it’.<sup>48</sup> In his 1963 novel *Hopscotch*, Julio Cortázar playfully explored these dynamics through a dialogue between his characters Ronald and Oliveira:

"I don't want to get abstruse and point out that you and I are two entities that are absolutely out of touch with one another except by means of feelings and words, things that one must mistrust if one is to be serious about it all."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘The Work of Representation’, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall, Culture, Media and Identities (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>47</sup> Hall, ‘The Work of Representation’, 24-25.

<sup>48</sup> Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, Aids and The Media* (London: Cassell, 1997), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Julio Cortazar, *Hopscotch* (London: Random House, 2014), 157.

This encapsulates my approach to representation (or ‘words’) in this thesis: that it is the primary tool through which meaning is delivered, but that it is also something of which we must be highly sceptical and questioning.

A key moment for representation in the history of sexuality was Walkowitz’s work *City of Dreadful Delight*. The focus of Walkowitz’s work was nominally child prostitution in Victorian London, with an aim of constructing experiences ‘through language and narrative’.<sup>50</sup> Walkowitz picks her representational sources (courtrooms, journals and newspapers) from a ‘constellation of media scandal, anti-vice campaigns, and proliferating sexual categories and identities’, and weaves a narrative framework of ‘sexual danger’ from them. The value of exploring language is that it throws open rhetorical ways for people to understand the world.<sup>51</sup> Walkowitz’s work has been an important reference point for this thesis not only methodologically, but also in terms of content. Yet this kind of representational approach does not so much chart change over time as, in Walkowitz’s own words, highlight ‘a shifting pattern of cultural and social perspectives, set in dynamic relationship to each other’.<sup>52</sup> As such, one potential criticism (similar to potential criticisms of microhistory outlined above) of such an approach is that it can produce only an isolated picture or assessment of an event or theme – something perhaps interesting for its own sake but with little appreciation of wider context or change. In this vein, historian David Vincent has argued that language is not necessarily meaningful in its own right. However, interpreting meaning in language can be ‘reliable and appropriate ... if the historian is willing to engage with the contexts, historical, personal and political, in which language is produced’.<sup>53</sup> I subscribe to this view, and perform contextual work in each case study to set representational discussions against wider understandings.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Walkowitz, 15, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Walkowitz, 32.

<sup>53</sup> David Vincent, quoted in Julie-Marie Strange, ‘Reading Language as a Historical Source’, in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Lucy Faire (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 204.

<sup>54</sup> In the Moors murders chapter, to take one example, I look at the ways in which newspapers described other news and cultural issues – other types of sex and other types of crime, but also general social and political moods.

## Media and Representation

A large proportion of my sources are media-based. Mass-media forms have long been significant vehicles for communication on child sexual abuse.<sup>55</sup> This is not restricted to recent decades; W.T. Stead's *Maiden Tribute* publications brought child prostitution to the public agenda in the 1880s. The media offers an enormously diverse and accessible space in which representations are extensively produced. And, as outlined above, it is in such representations that meaning is produced and communicated. My three case studies rely mainly on 'traditional' media types such as newspapers and other periodicals. But use of these as historical sources has always been fraught with difficulty. There are an enormous variety of subjectivities and individuals working within a non-homogenous media at any one time.<sup>56</sup> There is also an important legal consideration when calling into use media representation, namely to question what the media were *able* to represent.<sup>57</sup> The existence of such variables creates methodological uncertainties – although *all* historical sources face similar challenges. A critical eye must be taken to constructs of apparent reality: the intention of the group or individual publishing a piece; the purpose of the publication; the intended audience; whether readers believed what they read; how readers went on to discuss the contents of newspapers in their daily lives – at home, in the workplace, in the pub. In 1966, the year of the Moors murders trial, the theory of social constructionism appeared in a work by sociologists Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger; in it they claim that 'reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs'.<sup>58</sup> If we accept that we must be aware of the subjectivities inherent in writing and reading history, the same is true of all forms of discourse, including media. Vivien Burr has said of social constructionism that

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<sup>55</sup> For a thorough discussion of crime reporting in the media see Andrea Mayr and David Machin, *The Language of Crime and Deviance: An Introduction to Critical Linguistic Analysis in Media and Popular Culture* (London: A&C Black, 2012), chap. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Greer, *Sex Crime and the Media*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> I look, for example, at the *Obscene Publications Act* of 1959 and its impact in relation to representations of the Moors murders, 'Obscene Publications Act 1959', <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/7-8/66/contents>.

<sup>58</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1991), 13.

‘all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative’, and society itself is therefore a constantly evolving, socially constructed concept.<sup>59</sup>

With this as a backdrop, what then is the media, and what is its purpose? These are enormous questions that have been prominent in sociological studies for decades. Harrison et al., with reference to noted communication theorist Denis McQuail, have claimed that the media is not a homogenous whole; it is ‘a variety of different formats, with different purposes, focusing on different issues all with different agendas’.<sup>60</sup> As for these formats of media, McQuail, writing on mass communication, identified ‘television, radio, newspapers, film, music and new communication technologies’.<sup>61</sup> The first five categories are relatively self-explanatory, although within each there are of course wide variations according to media type, audience, author and location. I would also add books, magazines, and other periodicals to this list. By the latter (‘new communication technologies’), McQuail was doubtless referring to the emergence of the Internet although it is unlikely that he could have foreseen the speed and extent of growth in this area. The Internet has accelerated ways in which representations of child sexual abuse and (historic) paedophilic activity have been disseminated, consumed, and commented upon. As such, I have considered the linguistic and anachronistic challenges of using the Internet as a window onto abuse cases that occurred *before* the Internet itself existed. The Internet has therefore been a large presence in the crafting of this project, even if it has fallen outside the ostensible framework of periodisation.

There is a vast sociological literature on sex crime reporting in the media. I have categorised these into two camps. The first is a general body of work relating to sex crime and the media.<sup>62</sup> The second, some of which I cover

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<sup>59</sup> Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 2015), 3.

<sup>60</sup> K. Harrison, R. Manning, and K. McCartan, ‘Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of “Paedophilia”’, *Social & Legal Studies* 19, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 482.

<sup>61</sup> Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory An Introduction* (SAGE Publications, 1994), x.

<sup>62</sup> See, for example, Yvonne Jewkes, *Media and Crime*, Key Approaches to Criminology (London: Sage Publications, 2004); Chris Greer, *Sex Crime and the Media* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011); Keith Soothill and Sylvia Walby, *Sex Crime in the News* (London: Routledge, 1991); Steve Chibnall, *Law-and-Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977); Christiana Gregoriou, ed., *Constructing Crime: Discourse and Cultural Representations of Crime and ‘Deviance’* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Ulrike Tabbert, ‘Crime through a Corpus: The Linguistic Construction of Offenders in the British Press’,

in the contextual chapter, specifically focuses on the intersection of child sexual crime and the media.<sup>63</sup> One theoretical construct that often permeates these works, and which has been attached to the issues of youth culture, child sexual abuse and paedophilia, is that of the 'moral panic'.<sup>64</sup> Here I call on moral panic theory not as a method for understanding the representations of child sexual abuse within my own project, but to document and contextualise it as a significant way in which scholars have sought to deconstruct media activity. The term was formally introduced by British criminologist Jock Young in 1971 and then developed by sociologist Stanley Cohen in his seminal 1972 work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. Cohen described a moral panic as containing the following characteristics:

A condition, episode, person or groups of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people ... Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folk-lore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way that society conceives itself.<sup>65</sup>

For moral panic theorists looking specifically at child sexual abuse, the notion at the heart of their work is that the 'social reality' of child sexual abuse or paedophilia is not as influential in shaping language and opinion as rhetorical

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in *Constructing Crime: Discourse and Cultural Representations of Crime and 'Deviance'*, ed. Christiana Gregoriou (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 130–44.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain*; Kieran McCartan, 'Media Constructions and Reactions to, Paedophilia in Modern Society', in *Managing High-Risk Sex Offenders in the Community: Risk Management, Treatment and Social Responsibilities*, ed. Karen Harrison (Oxon: Willan Publishing, 2010), 248–68; Silverman and Wilson, *Innocence Betrayed: Paedophilia, the Media and Society*; Jenny Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse: Media Influence and Public Understanding of Sexual Violence Against Children* (London: Pluto Press, 2004); Jason Lee, *Celebrity, Pedophilia, and Ideology in American Culture* (New York: Cambria Press, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> See for recent examples Julian Petley et al., *Moral Panics in the Contemporary World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Charles Krinsky, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 2016); Charles Krinsky, *Moral Panics over Contemporary Children and Youth* (London: Routledge, 2016); Sarah Wright Monod, *Making Sense of Moral Panics: A Framework for Research* (New York: Springer, 2017).

<sup>65</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 1.

'panic' is, and the space in which rhetorical panic operates is very often the media.<sup>66</sup>

Chas Critcher's 2003 definition adopts a framework with two moral panic types, 'grass roots' and 'interest' and notes that threats to children are a common theme.<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Thompson has noted that 'panics' about child abuse in Britain cause threats to the family unit, 'and especially physical relations between fathers and their children, perhaps reflecting a general unease about masculinity and the role of the father'.<sup>68</sup> Simon Watney has claimed that the 1980s and 1990s panic over AIDS was also a manifestation of the defence of the family, as I explore in the Cleveland case study.<sup>69</sup> In moral panic literature, it has been common for researchers to adopt the panic metaphor in order to explore cultural feelings about sex.<sup>70</sup> Although the academic concept of the 'moral panic' is a twentieth-century construct, scholars have applied the term to older historical phenomena. Gilbert Herdt pinpoints the great masturbation 'epidemic' of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as one such example. For Herdt, the common thread between these moral panics is the disproportionate level of societal threat awarded to the so-called 'folk devil'. Herdt asserts that the moral panic is increasingly tied up with sexuality, and that there may be a link between using these panics as a means of achieving 'political hegemony'.<sup>71</sup> Cohen initially used his research to attach the moral panic to delinquency in Britain's youth, but in later volumes sex and sexuality have dominated. British criminologist and media theorist Yvonne Jewkes, writing in 2004, is one who has claimed that paedophilia in its socially constructed form could be seen as the biggest moral panic of the previous twenty years.<sup>72</sup> Both Jewkes and Stanley

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<sup>66</sup> Pamela Schultz, 'Naming, Blaming, and Framing: Moral Panic over Child Molesters and Its Implications for Public Policy', in *Moral Panics over Contemporary Children and Youth*, ed. Charles Krinsky (London: Routledge, 2016), 96.

<sup>67</sup> Chas Critcher, *Moral Panics And The Media* (Buckingham: McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth Thompson, *Moral Panics*, Key Ideas (London: Routledge, 1998), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Watney, *Policing Desire*, 43.

<sup>70</sup> Janice M. Irvine, 'Transient Feelings: Sex Panics and the Politics of Emotions', in *Moral Panics, Sex Panics: Fear and the Fight over Sexual Rights*, ed. Gilbert Herdt (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 235.

<sup>71</sup> Gilbert Herdt, 'Introduction: Moral Panics, Sexual Rights, and Cultural Anger', in *Moral Panics, Sex Panics: Fear and the Fight over Sexual Rights*, ed. Gilbert Herdt (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 1, 2.

<sup>72</sup> Jewkes, *Media and Crime*, 94.

Cohen himself, in a preface to a new edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, identify 2000 as a key year for the moral panic, seeing as it did the *News of the World*-led media campaign to 'name and shame' 110,000 registered sex offenders following the murder of schoolgirl Sarah Payne.<sup>73</sup> Whilst moral panics can operate beyond the media, scholars agree that the media plays a critical role in the process.

Historians and commentators have explored the more general issue of press involvement and responsibility in effecting changes in public opinion. Does media language influence opinion and attitudes, or rather *reflect* the ways in which communities and individuals think? And why does it matter? At a 2015 event on the future of the city of London, one panellist apportioned blame to the media for increases in pollution levels in the capital. The rationale was that the media had fostered a culture of paranoia around child safety in recent decades that is disproportionate to the actual threat. This development has made parents progressively less likely to allow their children to walk to school, in turn increasing the number of vehicles on the roads and poisonous substances in the air.<sup>74</sup> This roundabout claim shows the extent to which the charge of sensationalism against the media, particularly tabloid newspapers, has recurred in relation to crime generally and child sexual crime specifically. Writing on gang crime in Victorian London, Drew Gray has argued that 'contemporary [media] representations of youth helped create a fear that exaggerated the threat posed by gangs'.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, Harrison et al. have stated that the press 'tends to discuss paedophilia in an inappropriate, generalised, fearful and negative light', and offer a selection of recent headlines from the twenty-first century to demonstrate:

'Vile sickos sulking in high places'

'Paedo caught by perv site'

'Lonely heart sicko was a paedo'

'My brave girl caged a monster'

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<sup>73</sup> Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, xviii.

<sup>74</sup> Open House London, 'Open Debate: Can We Build a Cleaner City?' (London School of Economics, 9 September 2015).

<sup>75</sup> Drew Gray, 'Gang Crime and the Media in Late Nineteenth-Century London: The Regent's Park Murder of 1888', *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 4 (1 December 2013): 559.



‘Paedos have dodgy wiring’

‘Pervs on the loose’.<sup>76</sup>

Such examples, scholars of the media argue, do hold a genuine influence on people’s attitudes.<sup>77</sup>

Bingham et al. have noted that the newspaper press was a ‘crucial arena through which public opinion was shaped’.<sup>78</sup> By reading media sources, they argue, it is possible to elicit a sense, at least to some extent, of how groups (in his case the press) felt about social or political issues.<sup>79</sup> In awarding newspapers an active and influential role in the emergence of public issues, Bingham particularly points out the influential role of editors in ‘exploiting public curiosity about sex.’<sup>80</sup> Justin Bengry, too, has noted the importance of media directors’ political persuasions, drawing particular attention to the ‘strategy’ of sensationalism and the profit motives of newspaper groups.<sup>81</sup> As I show in the first case study with an analysis of the *News of the World*’s editorial intentions, individuals working in the media had their own agendas and behaviours. Jenny Diski, reviewing Bingham’s work, concludes that ‘the task of the tabloids was to try as hard as possible to make all the news that was *not* fit to print available to the knowing by means of suggestion and obfuscation’.<sup>82</sup> Alison Oram has looked at newspaper writing about sex since the 1950s, concluding that journalists tried to blend commercially entertaining copy with respectability: to titillate but to euphemise.<sup>83</sup> Clearly, there are those who assign the media a central and intentional role in the representational process.

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<sup>76</sup> Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, ‘Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of “Paedophilia”’, 487.

<sup>77</sup> See for instance Tobias Vogel, Gerd Bohner, and Michaela Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change* (Psychology Press, 2014); Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, ‘Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of “Paedophilia”’, 481-496.

<sup>78</sup> Bingham et al., ‘Historical Child Sexual Abuse’, 412-3.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*

<sup>80</sup> Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Justin Bengry, ‘Queer Profits: Homosexual Scandal and the Origins of Legal Reform in Britain’, in *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, ed. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Jenny Diski, ‘Rumour Is Utterly Unfounded’, *London Review of Books*, 8 October 2009.

<sup>83</sup> Alison Oram, ‘Love “Off the Rails” or “Over the Teacups”? Lesbian Desire and Female Sexualities in the 1950s British Popular Press’, in *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, ed. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43.

Yet the media ‘do not conjure up social problems in isolation’.<sup>84</sup> To take historian Peter Burke’s view, language both reflects and shapes the ‘culture’ and ‘society’ in which it is spoken.<sup>85</sup> It is not easy to measure the impact of this process. Intention alone does not enable the historian to say categorically whether the media actually created or exacerbated tides of popular opinion about sexual matters. Likewise, high circulation (and the *News of the World* had at one stage the highest in the English-speaking world) does not mean that the readers agree with the content.<sup>86</sup> I concur with Steve Chibnall’s view that ‘newspapers and television do not merely monitor the events of the real world; they construct representations and accounts of reality which are shaped by the constraints imposed upon them’.<sup>87</sup> Whilst forms of mass communication are principally intended to disseminate information, in the representation of that information a new reality is created. This is not dissimilar to the way in which a historian collects, arranges and presents sources and research. In terms of understanding the intention of historical figures and groups, any media-based source reading should therefore be taken as indicative, rather than conclusive. I argue that it is not possible to talk about ‘the media’ as a whole, and I am agnostic about the extent to which the historian can easily assign impact of motivation and responsibility to media figures or organisations, or measure true feeling from historical speaking. So whilst I do construct an *emotional* framework of feelings, motivations and attitudes around the *discursive* framework of representation, I hesitate to draw teleological conclusions from it.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse: Media Influence and Public Understanding of Sexual Violence Against Children*, 44.

<sup>85</sup> Julie-Marie Strange, ‘Reading Language as a Historical Source’, in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Lucy Faire (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 197.

<sup>86</sup> Circulation data from Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, *United Newspapers PLC and Fleet Holdings PLC: A Report on the Proposed Transfer of Fleet Holdings PLC to United Newspapers PLC* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1985).

<sup>87</sup> Steve Chibnall, *Law-and-Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), ix.

<sup>88</sup> For example, I document national press editors’ writings and memoirs.

## Challenges of Historical Representation

Attempting an objective discussion of paedophilia, one scholar has argued, is a potentially 'career-ending pursuit' for an academic.<sup>89</sup> This well asserts the historian's need to tread carefully when researching such a sensitive topic. It is the historian's own representation that forms the basis of Ankersmit's 'speaking about speaking', his or her 'representational language'.<sup>90</sup> I therefore use the remainder of this introduction to reflect, simply, on my own 'speaking'. What does it look like, and what is the theoretical thinking behind it? To tackle these questions, I revisit historiographical debates on the nature of historical writing. In doing so, I comment on the general challenges of historical representation, the challenges of representing child sexual abuse specifically, and the challenges of representation for me personally. I draw out some considerations about anachronism which are fundamental to this thesis and are elaborated in the concluding chapter. I contend in this thesis that child sexual abuse has been represented in different ways at specific times and in specific places, and that a relationship between past and present is central to child sexual abuse discussions in Britain. Current concern about abuse in legal, governance and mass communication fields surrounds Britain's historical, supposedly hidden paedophilic past, and present moralistic and legalistic correction of it. The large variances there have been in definitions of the key themes featured in this project amplify the issue of anachronism. Tony Ward has written on the problematic nature of delayed court action, and of the parallels with historical writing; legal courts have to claim to 'know' the past to some extent so that they can impose correct sanctions. Critically, 'events that the participants would not at the time have described as "child abuse" may be described in that way when viewed from a later period'.<sup>91</sup> This is a question of understanding the past through the values and subjectivities of the present, which is precisely the

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<sup>89</sup> Jim Byatt, *Rethinking the Monstrous: Transgression, Vulnerability and Difference in British Fiction Since 1967* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 98.

<sup>90</sup> Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 80.

<sup>91</sup> Tony Ward, 'Narrative and Historical Truth in Delayed Civil Actions for Child Abuse', in *Constructing Crime: Discourse and Cultural Representations of Crime and 'Deviance'*, ed. Christiana Gregoriou (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43, 44-45.

challenge that every historian faces. As Gillian Beer has it, 'we can never become past readers' in the purest sense, so bound are we to the present.<sup>92</sup>

Following the 'linguistic turn' sparked by Hayden White's work *Metahistory* (1973), a rift occurred in historical theory between those (such as Keith Jenkins) who propagated a postmodern conception of history – away from grand narratives, objectivity and truth, and towards the notion that the past is inherently inaccessible and unknowable – and the empirical epistemologists who continued to believe that the past, and truth, could be accessible.<sup>93</sup> At the centre of this historiographical debate is the notion that history is less about reconstructing the past itself as attempting to excavate meaning from the memory and writing of it.<sup>94</sup> As Peter Loewenberg has stated, 'history is not the [actual] collective memory of mankind. It is the reformation and reinterpretation of that memory by each historian according to his time, social circumstance, method, and subjective past'.<sup>95</sup> Many historians have come to realise the 'double nothingness in the writing of history and in the analysis of it: it is about something that never did happen in the way it comes to be *represented* (the happening exists in the telling or the text), and it is made out of materials that are not there, in an archive or anywhere else'.<sup>96</sup> It is the historian 'who makes the stuff of the past into a structure or event', things which do not exist in and of themselves.<sup>97</sup> Meaning in this type of history is constructed by

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<sup>92</sup> Gillian Beer, *Arguing with the Past: Essays in Narrative from Woolf to Sidney* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.

<sup>93</sup> See, for discussions of this question *par excellence*, Zagorin and Ankersmit in 1990 and then Zagorin and Jenkins at the turn of the millennium: Perez Zagorin, 'Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations', *History and Theory* 29, no. 3 (1 October 1990): 263–74; F. R. Ankersmit, '[Historiography and Postmodernism: Reconsiderations]: Reply to Professor Zagorin', *History and Theory* 29, no. 3 (1 October 1990): 275–96; Perez Zagorin, 'History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now', *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1 February 1999): 1–24; Keith Jenkins, 'A Postmodern Reply to Perez Zagorin', *History and Theory* 39, no. 2 (1 May 2000): 181–200; Perez Zagorin, 'Rejoinder to a Postmodernist', *History and Theory* 39, no. 2 (1 May 2000): 201–9.

<sup>94</sup> C. Behan McGullagh, *The Logic of History: Putting Postmodernism in Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach* (London: University of California Press, 1985), 8.

<sup>96</sup> Carolyn Steedman, 'Something She Called a Fever: Michelet, Derrida, and Dust', *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (1 October 2001): 1179, emphasis mine.

<sup>97</sup> Roland Barthes stated that 'the historian organises [facts] with the purpose of ... filling the vacuum of pure, meaningless series', Roland Barthes, 'The Discourse of History', in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 121.

interpreting the symbols and signs of the past. Fred Weinstein emphasises that all historical documentation – including data used by quantitative historians – is compiled in an inherently subjective way, ‘regardless of the scientific aspirations (or pretensions) of the theorists’.<sup>98</sup> As E.H. Carr had it, ‘like fish on a fishmonger’s slab, the historian collects facts, takes them home and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals’.<sup>99</sup> White wrote of the ‘*impossible* ideal of objectivity’.<sup>100</sup> Because White’s acolytes believed that the façade of objectivity and truth had crumbled, history was revealed to them as containing a fictive element.<sup>101</sup> Edgar Doctorow claimed that ‘there is no longer any such thing as fiction or non-fiction; there’s only narrative ... What’s real and what isn’t – I used to know, but I’ve forgotten’.<sup>102</sup> History is increasingly viewed not as an objective science but a subjective literature.<sup>103</sup> Weinstein says that this leaves us in a serious ‘crisis’ if we view the accumulation of data and evidence as the guiding force of historical practice.<sup>104</sup>

If we accept the notion that the only verifiable objective truth in history is that objectivity is impossible in history, then avowed subjectivity becomes the logical starting point. The specific subjective challenge for this thesis is one of anachronism: how to acknowledge the presence and impact of current understandings of child sexual abuse and paedophilia when examining events and moments during which understandings and representations of the same inherent topic were very different. Eric Hobsbawm once reflected that histories tend to concern the time in which they are written more than the era they focus on; ‘memory is about today. Memory isn’t about what happened; it’s about what

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<sup>98</sup> Fred Weinstein, ‘Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences’, *History and Theory* 34, no. 4 (1 December 1995): 303.

<sup>99</sup> John Willis, ‘Past Is Perfect’, *The Guardian*, 29 October 2001, sec. Media, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/oct/29/mondaymediasection.humanities>.

<sup>100</sup> Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 376, ix.

<sup>101</sup> Peter Brooks, ‘Symbolisation and Fiction-Making’, in *Explorations in Psychohistory: The Wellfleet Papers*, ed. Robert Jay Lifton (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) 214; also Paul Ricoeur who wrote of the ‘congruence’ of historical and fictional narrative, Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume II*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 156.

<sup>102</sup> E.L. Doctorow, cited in Weinstein, ‘The Problem of Subjectivity in History’: 172.

<sup>103</sup> See for example Simon Schama’s *Dead Certainties* (1991), a pair of ‘historical novellas’ in which Schama ‘made up’ a set of events and relayed them in a historical fashion. See also Normal Mailer’s work in attempting to break down distinctions between the real and the imagined.

<sup>104</sup> Weinstein, ‘Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences’, 318.

people later on think happened'.<sup>105</sup> In a 2012 seminar on the philosophy of history, Mark Donnelly explored this notion and agreed that a historian must have obligations towards – though I would prefer the term ‘understanding of’ – socio-political events of the present, which is after all the time in which the historian is writing.<sup>106</sup> In shaking off the negativity of some postmodern work which states that there is no way of finding out anything about the past and that all that exists is *text*, a middle way appears, as embodied by Jörn Rüsen and Ankersmit’s later work. Rüsen moderately states that we must at least recognise the relationship between past and present and be aware of the historian’s environment.<sup>107</sup> Ankersmit has claimed that historical writing can be successful so long as it recognises its structure and limitations. He draws a spatial metaphor for language and reality between the four ‘levels’ of history: first, the ‘object matter’ of the ‘world itself’; second, ‘aspects’ of the world, which we access via representation; third, the level of descriptive language itself; and fourth, the level of representational language (‘speaking about speaking’, or the historian’s own language).<sup>108</sup> By having an appreciation of these dynamics we can treat historical problems sensitively, with an awareness of the impact of both past and present on historical writing.

Something I encounter in my chapter on the Moors murders is a sense of people being unable to approach speaking about the nature of the crimes, being as they were too horrifying to countenance. How do we go about representing something that is ostensibly inaccessible to us in the past? Moreover, why is it important to do so? One example of this process is the way that victims of child sexual abuse are today telling their stories using modern descriptive language. Their stories are inherently historical. I will briefly discuss two imaginative representational examples that address deeply difficult, though distinct, topics. Both are very adept at acknowledging anachronism, reflexivity and subjectivity.

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<sup>105</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, Professor Eric Hobsbawm: Interview Transcript, Making History, 17 June 2008, [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Hobsbawm\\_Eric.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Hobsbawm_Eric.html).

<sup>106</sup> Mark Donnelly and Claire Norton, “‘Every Historian Who Is Not Too Stupid or Too Full of Herself Knows That What She Does Is Morally Indefensible’: Making History ‘Morally Defensible’” (Philosophy of History, Senate House, University of London, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> Jörn Rüsen, *Meaning and Representation in History* (Berghahn Books, 2008).

<sup>108</sup> Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 80.

In Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, the main character Artie is tormented over writing a book (*Maus* itself) about his parents' experiences at Auschwitz. He quotes Samuel Beckett to sum up his representational conundrum: 'every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness.' But after a moment's reflection, Artie realises Beckett's paradox: 'on the other hand, he SAID it'.<sup>109</sup> His problem becomes not one of whether to represent his parents' experiences, but of *how* to do so.<sup>110</sup> More recently, artist Una has confronted 1970s sexual abuse, sexual murder and misogyny through a personal graphic memoir (2015), *Becoming Unbecoming*. Una makes consistent use of 'hindsight' to explore her experiences, and is self-reflexive about her representation, noting that the 'words and images' we use are critical in countering abuse.<sup>111</sup> One page addresses current day revelations about Jimmy Savile, exclaiming sardonically how 'surprised' the West Yorkshire police force were 'when he was revealed to be ... a rapist, paedophile, hebephile, ephebophile, gerontophile and necrophile, and that all of this had happened right under their noses'.<sup>112</sup> The implication here is that hindsight is a wonderful thing, particularly given that the terms Una uses were not commonplace for the vast majority of Savile's lifetime (or indeed after it). She deftly registers the interplay between past and present, noting that 'everyday acts of misogyny have always been around, but now they are visible to all'.<sup>113</sup> These examples show that self-reflexivity can be a successful approach when dealing with challenging topics located in the past – no matter the medium – and have helped to inform considerations of subjectivity in this thesis.

I wish finally to consider the effect the presence of the researcher (me) has on both the subject (this work itself) and its environment (the existing body of works in this field, whether overtly historical or otherwise) – and vice versa. Whilst this is a general comment on any historian's natural subjectivity and of

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<sup>109</sup> Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (London: Penguin, 1992), 45.

<sup>110</sup> See for more on the concept of the impossibility of representation Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man/The Truce* (London: Abacus, 2014).

<sup>111</sup> Una, *Becoming Unbecoming* (Oxford: Myriad Editions, 2015), 165.

<sup>112</sup> Una, 127.

<sup>113</sup> Una, 117.

anachronism, there are other factors to consider. Adult males perpetrate the overwhelming majority of child sexual abuse, which is a sobering starting point for an adult male researcher.<sup>114</sup> And as a male researcher, I sit in a minority of historians who explore this topic.<sup>115</sup> My research has brought uncomfortable moments. One example involved time spent at the British Library reading restricted publications of the Paedophile Information Exchange, delivered to my desk by nonplussed library staff. The nature of the subject matter has led to upset and fatigue at various stages during the research process. Methodologically, as I have explored, there have been significant challenges. Given the thesis' linguistic approach, I have had to take extra care with my own language so as not to slip into the kinds of representations, anachronisms, and sensationalisms that feature in my research. Given changes in the representational landscape of child sexual abuse since I began the project in 2012, I have also closely considered linguistic and thematic developments in the present, as well as the past. I have helped myself in this regard by engaging with colleagues in the growing field of the history of sexuality, as well as other professionals involved in research into child sexual abuse.<sup>116</sup> This has positively influenced my understanding of child sexual abuse, sexual categorisation, queer histories and gender.<sup>117</sup> This thesis participates in the work being done by

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<sup>114</sup> See, for sample evidence, Children's Commissioner, "I Thought I Was the Only One. The Only One in the World": Interim Report' (Children's Commissioner, November 2012).

<sup>115</sup> Other male examples include Steven Angelides, Adrian Bingham, Philip Jenkins, Mathew Thomson and Kieran McCartan.

<sup>116</sup> For example the Loudoun Trust, for whom I act as a historical consultant. The Trust's mission is 'to advance education for public benefit about paedo-sexual offending and sexual crimes against children'.

<sup>117</sup> For histories of sexuality, important influences have been Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Know*; Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*; Jeffrey Weeks, *The Languages of Sexuality* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011); for queer histories, Matt Cook, "Queer Conflicts: Love, Sex and War, 1914-1967," in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Matt Cook (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 145-77; Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957*; Justin Bengry, "Queer Profits: Homosexual Scandal and the Origins of Legal Reform in Britain," in *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, ed. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); for theoretical background Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Bourke, *Rape*.



scholars of sexuality who historicise child sexual abuse.<sup>118</sup> It reveals the complex mechanisms of historical representations of sexual violence against children, making competing narratives accessible and visible. And it signals that the issue of child sexual abuse can act as a window onto broader British cultural and social histories.

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<sup>118</sup> For those working on child sexual abuse, see especially Louise Jackson, Carol Smart, Mathew Thompson, Louise Settle, Adrian Bingham and Lucy Delap. A clear signal of increased historical interest in the topic is the *History and Policy* series on historical child sexual abuse, headed by Louise Jackson.

## **Chapter One**

### **Contextual and Definitional Perspectives on Paedophilia, Abuse, the Abuser and the Child**

#### **Introduction**

A 2017 report on the scale of child sexual abuse likened the issue's changing linguistic landscape since the 1970s to a 'clock face on which parts are highlighted and others in shadow: holding all forms of and contexts for CSA in view at the same time has been elusive'.<sup>1</sup> As an image it hints at the difficulties that have been faced across disciplines in producing serviceable definitions and concepts. Whilst there have ostensibly been areas of historical 'shadow' or silence around child sexual abuse, this is in part a symptom of looking back through a subjective semantic lens, searching for familiarity in language and not finding it. I challenge the notion that the history of child sexual abuse is entirely shrouded in representational darkness, and look instead for historical difference, richness and complexity by simply asking four questions in this contextual chapter: what is paedophilia? What is child sexual abuse? Who or what is the abuser? Who or what is the child? On the one hand, my definitional survey contributes to existing scholarly work on these complex areas. Yet those four themes also feature heavily, both directly and indirectly, in the three case studies that follow. In addressing these questions and exploring the ways in which the issues have been constructed and developed, this chapter therefore acts as a mooring for the representations and debates I encounter in those cases. The Moors, PIE and Cleveland episodes were not isolated in British history but part of a wider contextual story.

On an epistemological level, there is a reason for selecting these particular four topics that can be demonstrated with a request to the reader: imagine that you know nothing at all of 'child sexual abuse' other than the term itself. In order to start crafting a definition, think about the mutually exclusive components that you would need to scrutinise. Sexual abuse is clearly one. But

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<sup>1</sup> Liz Kelly and Kairika Karsna, 'Measuring the Scale and Changing Nature of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation: Scoping Report' (Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, London Metropolitan University, July 2017), 5.

what is sexually abusive behaviour? The child is the object of the abuse. But without an understanding of who the 'child' is we cannot begin to understand the nature of child sexual abuse. For example, is pubescence, rather than legal frameworks, the key to defining childhood in a sexual context? There are also 'hidden' lexical elements to the term 'child sexual abuse', those being the abuser, without which child sexual abuse does not occur, and their sexual attraction to the child (or, if not sexual, then their motivation for abuse).<sup>2</sup> I therefore argue that a holistic approach is required in historical readings of child sexual abuse, and that it should be interpreted with reference to its constituent parts. As historian of sexuality Vern Bullough has warned, 'distinction is lost when these areas are collapsed into one category called "sexual abuse"'.<sup>3</sup> In exhibiting these debates on a wider scale, I reveal the definitional changeability that has surrounded child sexual abuse and point out key attitudinal shifts over time. To be clear, I am not promising to provide here a conclusive set of terms, but instead document the very definitional complexities and temporalities that have caused difficulties in legal, political, medical and social spheres. Why does definitional complexity matter? Definitions are linguistic constructs that, more than other linguistic forms, seek out the *essence* of a thing. Definitions are a blessing and a curse, and ultimately a paradox: in being linguistic, a definition is to humans both the opening (or 'unconcealment') of essence, but at the same time definition (again, being linguistic) is highly subjective, sometimes disguised, always changing, and therefore dangerous.<sup>4</sup> In accepting this premise, and in undertaking a definitional survey of key terms relating to child sexual abuse here, the production of this chapter has been a highly formulative process for this project.

The chapter is structured in line with the four questions I have introduced. The themes and content that run through them take the form of a

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<sup>2</sup> I could have foregrounded here other important topics such as family, state, or law, but for pragmatic reasons have opted to weave these considerations into the survey in a complementary way.

<sup>3</sup> Vern L. Bullough, 'History in Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents in Western Societies', in *Pedophilia: Biosocial Dimensions*, ed. Jay R. Feierman (London: Springer Science & Business Media, 2012), 82.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of language, concealment and unconcealment, see Gerrit Jan van der Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language: Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida on Disclosure and Displacement* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2010), 1–4.

literature review or survey, in which I explore the critical factors – historical, linguistic, legal/political, medical, social and cultural – that have impacted each one. In doing this, I introduce historiographical literature that shows how key categories were constructed throughout the twentieth century (and indeed before that). This kind of study also allows me to introduce comparative international context, including thinking done in the United States that regularly evolved alongside (or just ahead of) that across the Atlantic, for example in 1970s feminism. Regarding the ordering to the topics, sexual attraction to children (or otherwise motivation to engage sexually with a child) seems a logical, if fraught starting place. Clearly, given the complexity, there is crossover between the topics I have chosen – hence the complexity that I am documenting – and I have worked to avoid repetition where possible. This has occasionally meant that certain discussions may appear under one heading where it may have seemed equally apposite elsewhere (for example, concerns such as child prostitution and age of consent debates largely fall here under the heading of ‘the child’, although they may have sat under ‘child sexual abuse’). The source base is mixed, with broad reference to secondary analytical work in historical, sociological, criminological and medical fields, both recent and past, and also primary institutional, political, and legislative documentation (such as the *Sexual Offences Act*). The examples and illustrations I use in this chapter are, of course, not exhaustive, but have been selected to chart and explore some of the critical discussions that are particularly relevant to the three case studies.

### **What is ‘Paedophilia’?**

‘Paedophilia’ is a formulation with origins in the European sexological movement of the late nineteenth century. My second case study on PIE will show that it is a much more recent British representational and cultural phenomenon, dating quite specifically to the ‘PIE moment’ of the 1970s. However, this project shows that there is a longer, layered and global history to sexual attraction to children and representations of it, reflecting the reality that ‘sexually abusive behaviours towards children have always existed in any

human group.’<sup>5</sup> Various terms have been used interchangeably over time, such as paedophilia, child sexual abuse, neophilia, chronophilia, pederasty, ephebophilia, hebephilia, Greek love, man/boy love and intergenerational sex.<sup>6</sup> As historian of sexuality Diederik F. Janssen has commented, ‘even in the twenty-first century, legal, psychiatric and culture-critical dimensions of related terms are rarely cleanly distinguished’.<sup>7</sup>

It is hardly surprising that variations in definition across narrow fields of expertise have translated to a lack of clarity in public discourse on paedophilia. The media plays a critical role in this. As legal scholar Mary Graw Leary has written, ‘terminology surrounding child abuse and exploitation is often first produced by the media, which values sensational language ... over precise language’.<sup>8</sup> In a controversial *Guardian* article from January 2013, journalist Jon Henley attempted to rationalise the national debate about paedophilia in the wake of the Jimmy Savile scandal. However, the quite conclusively stated definition of a paedophile in his article – ‘someone who has a primary or exclusive sexual interest in prepubescent children’ – masks the troubling lack of consensus.<sup>9</sup> As outlined below, this is not an agreed-upon definition. The American Psychiatric Association subscribes to this notion, but there is no reference to pubescence in UK law, which instead takes a broader approach to the ‘child’ (with the most legally egregious crimes defined as those carried out on children under 13). Harrison et al. identify the large variances in definitions in considering ‘how paedophilia is defined by the media and the public at large, suggesting that the public appear to be more familiar with socio-legal rather

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<sup>5</sup> Steven Angelides, “The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century,” *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 126 (2005): 272–295; quotation from Cosimo Schinaia, *On Paedophilia* (London: Karnac, 2010), 89.

<sup>6</sup> Theo Sandfort, Edward Brongersma, and Alex van Naerssen, ‘Man-Boy Relationships: Different Concepts for a Diversity of Phenomena’, in *Male Intergenerational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological, and Legal Perspectives*, ed. Theo Sandfort, Edward Brongersma, and Alex van Naerssen (London: Harrington Park Press, 1991), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Diederik F. Janssen, “‘Chronophilia’: Entries of Erotic Age Preference into Descriptive Psychopathology”, *Medical History* 59, no. 4 (October 2015): 575.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Graw Leary, ‘The Language of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation’, in *Refining Child Pornography Law: Crime, Language, and Social Consequences*, ed. Carissa Byrne Hessick, Law, Meaning, and Violence (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 109, <http://muse.jhu.edu/book/47456>.

<sup>9</sup> Jon Henley, ‘Paedophilia: Bringing Dark Desires to Light’, the *Guardian*, 3 January 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/jan/03/paedophilia-bringing-dark-desires-light>.

than clinical understandings'.<sup>10</sup> But this itself is unclear. Which socio-legal understandings, exactly, are the public familiar with (there are large variances within legal definitions)? Who exactly are 'the public'? And how far does the media's influence spread? I do not provide the answers to these questions here, but I pose them simply to emphasise the difficulties that have existed in crafting definitions of 'paedophilia' and how it is understood. A confluence of interpretations has meant no one clear definition. Although there is an appearance of clarity when the word is spoken or printed, huge complexity sits behind that.

Modern British engagement with child sexual abuse has invariably meant a lexical interface with 'paedophilia', which has become the pre-eminent category for describing sexual attraction to children. There has been a problematic lack of delineation between human *state* (attraction to children) and *act* (sexual activity with children). Research for this chapter shows that paedophilia, in leading psychiatric definitions, is a state or condition, and may develop into a paraphilia. Child sexual abuse is a value term describing the act of adult sexual activity against the child, which *may or may not* be motivated by paedophilia or paedophilic disorder. This first section of the chapter looks at the ways that 'paedophilia' has been linguistically and conceptually constructed and discussed. There is and has been a lack of consensus – sometimes large, sometimes subtle – both within and between key disciplines: linguistic, legal, medical-psychological (biological), socio-cultural (namely in the media) and academic. I explore this aetiology, appreciating that because concepts of sex, abuse and childhood vary according to culture, era, and myriad other factors, so too do concepts of attraction.

Heike Bauer has noted that to speak of sexology in the nineteenth century is itself an anachronistic exercise. Key figures – including Sigmund Freud, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis and Magnus Hirschfield – 'did not self-identify as "sexologists" even as they staked out a specialism in sexual matters', and 'sexology' was constructed as a field of study more fully after the

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<sup>10</sup> K. Harrison, R. Manning, and K. McCartan, 'Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of "Paedophilia"', *Social & Legal Studies* 19, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 487.

Second World War.<sup>11</sup> Whilst literacy rates improved throughout nineteenth-century Britain, sexological research was often based upon studies of the nobility, and were read largely by the upper and middle-classes. There is therefore debate as to the extent of their immediate influence.<sup>12</sup> Historian of sexuality Chris Waters feels that it was after 1945 that Freud and others became more accessible figures to the British public.<sup>13</sup> Either way, in the late nineteenth century 'sexologists' began to publish their theories on sexual categorisation and variations in human sexuality. Their contributions appeared in the wider context of interest in scientific inquiry and in sexual language. This had manifested in issues such as the rise of eugenics amidst fears over the degeneration of society, resultant attempts to promote fitness within the population, and the sterilisation and segregation of the unfit.<sup>14</sup>

Sexologists introduced several categories of 'perversion': 'sodomasochism', 'fetishism', 'transvestism', 'hermaphroditism', 'exhibitionism', 'necrophilia', and 'homosexuality', the last of which came into use in the English language in around 1891.<sup>15</sup> Scholars dating back to Foucault in the 1960s have argued that homosexuality was the central tenet of sexological categorisation.<sup>16</sup> Adult sexual attraction to children was researched and appeared as a '*sui generis*' sexual category (or perversion) in the 1880s, with studies on sexual inclination towards children appearing in France, Spain, Germany, Italy and

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<sup>11</sup> Heike Bauer and Ivan Crozier, 'Sexology, Historiography, Citation, Embodiment: A Review and (Frank) Exchange', *History of The Human Sciences* (blog), 27 June 2017, <http://www.histhum.com/?p=367>.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance Cate Haste, who argues that the impact of sexologists was already being felt by the First World War, Cate Haste, *Rules of Desire: Sex in Britain: World War I to the Present* (London: Vintage, 2002), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Chris Waters, 'Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and the State: Discourses of Homosexual Identity in Interwar Britain', in *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 166.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 169-176.

<sup>15</sup> See for summaries Garton, 171; H.G. Cocks, 'Secrets, Crimes and Diseases, 1800-1914', in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Matt Cook (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 135; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, Second Edition, Themes in British Social History (New York: Longman, 1997), 148-151.

<sup>16</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 43; Ivan Crozier, 'Homosexuality and Sexology', ed. Patricia Whelehan and Anne Bolin, *The International Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality*, Major Reference Works (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); Janssen, "'Chronophilia'", 575.

elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> It was Krafft-Ebing who coined the term '*paedophilia erotica*' and labelled it a 'psychosexual perversion' in 1896. 'In cases of genuine paedophilia', Krafft-Ebing wrote, 'the subject is drawn only to the sexually quite immature'.<sup>18</sup> With these categories of deviancy, the idea of sexual normality, too, was created.

Foucault famously placed the birth of 'sexuality' as an entire concept within human consciousness in this period.<sup>19</sup> The emergence of sexology was a critical point in the way that sex was socially and culturally constructed, even if the results were not always immediate.<sup>20</sup> Works that preached sexual liberation did percolate, with Havelock Ellis particularly influential in Britain and the United States. There are roots in the sexologists' work of a tolerance for homosexuality, as well as evidence that challenged the conception that women were asexual. Some of the theorists, such as Hirschfield and Edward Carpenter, were homosexual themselves, whilst Ellis was married to a lesbian.<sup>21</sup> Ellis tried to remove a sense of fear from sexual 'perversion', and did groundbreaking work in trying to present homosexuality as not an evil and morally wicked act, but as 'a harmless physical variation'.<sup>22</sup> Krafft-Ebing, too, attempted to communicate the plight of 'homosexuals', noting that 'public feeling ... stigmatizes their acts, and the law ... threatens them with disgraceful punishment. Before them lies mental despair – even insanity and suicide'.<sup>23</sup> There is resonance here with the way in which paedophiles came to be described, particularly in the media, in latter stages of the twentieth century – as social outcasts. Krafft-Ebing wrote in the same volume of child molesters and their social position. He ventured that the imprisonment of paedophiles without treatment would see them reoffend upon release.<sup>24</sup> Again prescient was his assessment of the association of homosexuality to paedophilia, namely that

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<sup>17</sup> Janssen, "Chronophilia", 586.

<sup>18</sup> See R.v. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. F.J. Rebman, English Adaptation of Twelfth German Edition (New York: Rebman Company, 1931), Kindle edition, Location 9959-9991.

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, 42–44.

<sup>20</sup> Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, 155-6.

<sup>21</sup> Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, 169, 181.

<sup>22</sup> Cocks, 'Secrets, Crimes and Diseases, 1800-1914'; Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, 136.

<sup>23</sup> Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1998, 383.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph LoPiccolo, 'Introduction to the Arcade Edition', in *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998), ix.



homosexuals were no more likely to become child molesters than heterosexuals. Nonetheless, the association remained far into the twentieth century, as I shall explore in depth in the second case study. Sexologists of the late nineteenth century did not cite a huge number of cases of child sexual abuse – only ten for Krafft-Ebing – which is why in part the feminist activist Florence Rush labels their work a ‘cover-up’.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, the advances in sexology, though still often unrefined, coupled with the Victorian drive for child protection and welfare, helped create a framework in which sexual categories such as sexual attraction to children were made visible.

Etymologically, Krafft-Ebing picked the Ancient Greek stems ‘-paedo’ (of a child) and ‘-philia’ (love or liking of). However, this fusion alone does not reflect Krafft-Ebing’s meaning, where the emphasis was really on ‘psychosexual perversion’.<sup>26</sup> Today, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2005) defines paedophilia rather laconically as ‘sexual desire directed towards children’, with none of Krafft-Ebing’s suggested inherent perversion.<sup>27</sup> The *Collins English Dictionary* differs, defining paedophilia as ‘the *condition* of being sexually attracted to children’.<sup>28</sup> This is a subtle but distinct difference because the emphasis is on the individual paedophile’s condition: paedophilia is a personal state of being, rather than apparently isolated feelings (as in the *OED*) or acts. Whilst this simple comparison does not appreciate potential editorial variances between the two publications, there is still discord between respected and popular linguistic references accessible by the general public. This suggests immediately that there is no one clear lexical definition available (or rather, perhaps, that there is more than one). This issue is exacerbated when we extend the comparison to the word ‘paedophile’. The latest edition of the *OED* states that a paedophile is ‘an adult who is sexually attracted to children’.<sup>29</sup> *Collins*, however, defines a paedophile as ‘a *person* who is sexually attracted to children’, and

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<sup>25</sup> Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 80; Janssen, “Chronophilia”, 588.

<sup>26</sup> Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1931, Location 9937.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Paedophilia | Pedophilia, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/135968>.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Paedophilia’, *Collins English Dictionary*, <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/paedophilia>. Emphasis mine

<sup>29</sup> ‘Paedophile | Pedophile, Adj. and N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/135967>.

*Cambridge Dictionaries* similarly plump for ‘someone who is sexually interested in children’ – a significant distinction to the *OED* and one that theoretically allows the concept of other children or adolescents being paedophiles, as well as adults.<sup>30</sup>

The *OED* has historically used coeval references to support entries. A look at these references helps to chart the ways that definitions evolve over time. For the original entry of ‘paedophilia’ in 1906, the *OED* used Havelock Ellis’ description of ‘paidophilia’ as the ‘love of children’, but (as with colleague Krafft-Ebing) under a heading of ‘abnormality’, from his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*.<sup>31</sup> In 1926 the source was the *Medical Journal and Record*: ‘one must keep clearly in mind in dealing with pedophilia the distinction between that mediating homosexuality, and the much more pure perversion which is our subject’.<sup>32</sup> This hints again at the troubling associations made between homosexuality and paedophilia. By 1962, a source for the dictionary entry was a (BBC) *Listener* article that commented on Stanley Kubrick’s film *Lolita*. In the 1989 (*Second Edition*) version of the *OED*, paedophilia was ‘an abnormal, esp. sexual, love of young children’.<sup>33</sup> I noted the shift from ‘young children’ in 1989 to simply ‘children’ in 2005, plus the dropping of the words ‘abnormal’ and ‘love’. With this, the most recent *OED* entry has become broader and less distinct than the preceding definition. This mirrors the wider social position since the 1980s, where ever-baggier definitions of paedophilia mask its essential nature. This has led to a frustration amongst criminologists, activists and sociologists who have advocated more realistic and streamlined definitions – ‘or at least a critical examination of current understandings’.<sup>34</sup>

During a 1997 House of Lords exchange, Lord Williams of Mostyn was asked what the legal definition of paedophilia was. He responded by pointing out that ‘there is no legal definition of the term “paedophile”’, before going on to cite the *OED* (1989) definition of paedophile as detailed in my lexical outline

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Paedophile’, Collins English Dictionary, <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/paedophile>.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Paedophilia | Pedophilia, N.’

<sup>32</sup> ‘Paedophile | Pedophile, Adj. and N.’

<sup>33</sup> ‘Paedophilia | Pedophilia, N.’

<sup>34</sup> See for example Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, ‘Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of “Paedophilia”’, 492.

above ("a person with paedophilia, i.e. an abnormal especially sexual love of children").<sup>35</sup> Whilst the *OED* definition has evolved, the legal status has not changed since 1997. Paedophilia does not exist as a criminal act (or criminal state, or condition, for that matter), although it may of course lead to it.<sup>36</sup> As sexual abuse psychologist Dr Nina Borrowes has stated:

the law does not sanction sexual desire. Laws are made around what we do with our desires. The paedophile who never acts on their desire is a law abiding member of the community. The paedophile who does act on their desire becomes a sex offender.<sup>37</sup>

Such abuse, legislatively, is made up of the offences as outlined in the *Sexual Offences Act* (which I introduce later). But distinctions between sexual desires and sexual crimes have not always been accurately recognised, even by those who might be expected to speak more clearly. Take a 2015 Commons debate in which the outgoing Conservative Justice Secretary Chris Grayling, seeking to reject any equivalence between homosexuality and paedophilia, described the latter as 'a crime'.<sup>38</sup> Ironically, in doing so Grayling evoked discussions about the *de facto* historical criminalisation of homosexual desire itself, including the 1898 Vagrancy Act extension that connected female prostitutes and gay men to vagabondage and considered them *liable* to commit a sexual crime.<sup>39</sup> Take also Professor of Criminology Yvonne Jewkes, who in the 2015 edition of her volume *Media and Crime* commented that 'while it cannot be characterized as an "ordinary" crime, paedophilia is far from extraordinary and the murder of children by strangers has remained remarkably consistent over the last 30 years'.<sup>40</sup> The easy connection drawn here between paedophilia and child

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<sup>35</sup> 'House of Lords Hansard Deb, 14 Oct 1997: Column WA113', 14 October 1997.

<sup>36</sup> See the IICSA's commentary: 'It is helpful to note that having a sexual preference or interest in children and young people is not a criminal offence - however acting on that sexual preference or interest is a criminal offence', 'Terms and Phrases Relating to Child Sexual Abuse' (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, n.d.), <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/1412/view/Independent%20Inquiry%20into%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20%28IICSA%29%20VSCP%20Terms%20and%20Phrases.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Dr Nina Borrowes, "'We Need to Support the Good Paedophiles'", *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 November 2014, sec. Women, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11252821/Paedophiles-We-need-to-support-the-good-ones.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 25 June 2015, Vol 597, c1054.

<sup>39</sup> See Watney's comments on the 'criminalisation of homosexual desire', Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, Aids and The Media* (London: Cassell, 1997), 89; also Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton University Press, 2004), 73.

<sup>40</sup> Yvonne Jewkes, *Media and Crime* (London: SAGE, 2015), 80.

murder shows how short the cognitive distance can be between paraphilic desire and fatal offence. Whilst there does seem now to be a widening media understanding of paedophiles who claim not to offend, criminal and legislative language still has a tendency to hinder, rather than assist, a search for a working, consistent definition of paedophilia itself.<sup>41</sup>

There has been extensive scholarly debate on the criminological and legal aspects of paedophilia and child sexual abuse. These have tended to look at four areas: first, attempts to draw up definitions of paedophilia, childhood, sexual offences generally and child sexual offences specifically; second, and most commonly, analyses of the responses to abuse and offending, particularly in policy, regulatory and punitive spheres; third, assessments of the way paedophilia and abuse are currently regulated, defined and discussed, with consensus being that clearer definitions are required, the role of the media needs to be revised, and new research directions are desirable; and fourth, more recent work which has looked at the intersection of the Internet, child pornography, and criminality. Most scholars advocate an applied approach with a more informed, realistic discourse and policy. Much of this work is recent, appearing in the years since 2000. Truly historical approaches to 'paedophilia' as a singular issue are few. On definitions, criminologists Karen Harrison, Kieran McCartan and Rachel Manning published a good précis in 2010 which registers the difficulties inherent in defining paedophilia across all disciplines, particularly when extremely high levels of media interest and involvement have muddied the waters further. They call for a clearer understanding of paedophilia, which could be achieved through cultural analysis.<sup>42</sup> Many scholars have written general volumes on sex crime as a wider issue, but which also consider child sexual abuse and paedophilia. Criminologist Terry Thomas looks at definitions of abuse and civil and criminal responses to sex crime.<sup>43</sup> Christina Mancini's volume on *Sex Crime, Offenders and Society* pulls together different definitions of sex crime, as well as societal responses to it and attempts to

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<sup>41</sup> See Burrowes, plus 2017 BBC interviews with 'non-offending' paedophiles, Catherine Burns, 'The Paedophiles Who Don't Want to Abuse', *BBC News*, 11 September 2017, sec. UK, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41213657>.

<sup>42</sup> Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, 'Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of "Paedophilia"', 483.

<sup>43</sup> Terry Thomas, *Sex Crime* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013).

reform policy.<sup>44</sup> The final section on policy and reform is useful in that it looks historically at several decades' worth of legislative change. Definitions of childhood have also been a focal point for criminologists, as this is a key definitional hurdle to formulating responses to paedophilia. Eric Heinze's edited collection from 2000 is a good example of scholarship that explores this conundrum.<sup>45</sup>

Governance and social responses to crime are the prevailing and central theme of most criminological and legal work on paedophilia. Books by criminal justice scholars Amanda Matravers and Anne-Marie McAlinden have focused on the responses to sex crime and sexual offenders in the community, with McAlinden noting that 'contemporary popular and state-led responses to the risk posed by sex offenders are largely disintegrative in nature'.<sup>46</sup> This echoes much of the extant scholarship that calls for assessments of regulation and policy, particularly given the extraordinarily emotive nature of public and media responses to paedophilia and paedophilic crimes. In a 2002 journal article, Martha-Marie Kleinhans noted the types of '(over-)reactions' to paedophilic sex offences: 'physical mutilation, hormonal alteration and total ostracism from society' are all offered.<sup>47</sup> She also offers insights into the problematic distinctions of adulthood and childhood. Samantha Ashenden's 2004 work on governance notes the 1970s as a key period in which child sexual abuse was animated in the UK. This was then magnified by 1987's Cleveland scandal.<sup>48</sup> Both the increase in knowledge of sexual crimes against children and the Cleveland scandal will be focus areas in this project. Ashenden hints at the

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<sup>44</sup> Christina Mancini, *Sex Crime, Offenders, and Society: A Critical Look at Sexual Offending and Policy* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Eric Heinze, *Of Innocence and Autonomy: Children, Sex and Human Rights* (Ashgate/Dartmouth, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> See Amanda Matravers, *Sex Offenders in the Community* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013); Anne-Marie McAlinden, 'Managing Risk: From Regulation to the Reintegration of Sexual Offenders', *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 6, no. 2 (2006): 197–218; Quotation from Anne-Marie McAlinden, *The Shaming of Sexual Offenders: Risk, Retribution and Reintegration* (Portland: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 6.

<sup>47</sup> Martha-Marie Kleinhans, 'Criminal Justice Approaches to Paedophilic Sex Offenders', *Social & Legal Studies* 11, no. 2 (1 June 2002): 233.

<sup>48</sup> Samantha Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse: Negotiating the Boundaries of Public and Private, Law and Science* (London: Routledge, 2004), 11–13.

'historically quite specific' understandings that we hold about childhood for instance, but does not fully explore this historical context.<sup>49</sup>

Other works have explored social and governmental responses to paedophilia and child sexual abuse in looking to offer new pathways in regulation, punitive responses and treatment for sexual offenders, with the ultimate aim being a reduction in recidivism.<sup>50</sup> McCartan's 2014 collection, *Responding to Sexual Offending*, offers a thorough, interdisciplinary approach to sex crime in society – though again is somewhat lacking in historical perspective.<sup>51</sup> Richard Wright's edited second edition on *Sex Offender Laws* covers similar ground and is more overt in calling for 'new directions' on reaction and policy, largely with a U.S. perspective.<sup>52</sup> One theme throughout the collection, as well as in other works by feminist scholars such as Carol Smart, is the notion that regulation of sex offences has typically been more offender than victim-focused.<sup>53</sup> Studies have also explored the changing spaces and places of paedophilic activity and sexual crime against children. In recent years this has most notably been reflected in studies that look at the intersection of paedophilia, child pornography and the Internet. As in the work of scholars cited above which look at crime in other areas of society, scholarship on these topics has attempted to define Internet-based crime, examine offender behaviour and treatment, and argue for more rigorous laws and policy controls.<sup>54</sup> Again, this makes up an important body of work in criminological and policy research areas, but as with the more general volumes, they are very

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<sup>49</sup> Ashenden, 7.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Seth L. Goldstein, *The Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Practical Guide to Assessment, Investigation, and Intervention, Second Edition* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 1999); Georgia Zara and David P. Farrington, *Criminal Recidivism: Explanation, Prediction and Prevention* (London: Routledge, 2015), chap. 6; Arjan A. J. Blokland and Patrick Lussier, eds., *Sex Offenders: A Criminal Career Approach* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), chaps 7, 14, 17; Donna Vandiver, Jeremy Braithwaite, and Mark Stafford, *Sex Crimes and Sex Offenders: Research and Realities* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), chap. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Kieran McCartan, ed., *Responding to Sexual Offending: Perceptions, Risk Management and Public Protection* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Richard Wright, *Sex Offender Laws, Second Edition: Failed Policies, New Directions* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Carol Smart, 'A History of Ambivalence and Conflict in the Discursive Construction of the "Child Victim" of Sexual Abuse', *Social & Legal Studies* 8, no. 3 (1 September 1999): 391.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Ethel Quayle and Max Taylor, *Child Pornography: An Internet Crime* (East Sussex: Routledge, 2004); Dennis Howitt and Kerry Sheldon, *Sex Offenders and the Internet* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2009); Alisdair A. Gillespie, 'Indecent Images of Children: The Ever-Changing Law', *Child Abuse Review* 14, no. 6 (1 November 2005): 430–43.

much contemporary and ‘forward-thinking’ in the sense that they look to improve the way that paedophilia and paedophilic crime is regulated and controlled. My work draws on this research but takes an overtly historical approach.

As with linguistic and legal explorations of paedophilia, medical and clinical communities have struggled over time to craft a durable definition, with attitudes varying according to era and discipline. In 1953, renowned American sexologist Alfred Kinsey published a report on *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. In it, he claimed with his co-authors that it is ‘difficult to understand why a child, except for its cultural conditioning, should be disturbed at having its genitalia touched, or disturbed at seeing the genitalia of other persons, or disturbed at even more specific sexual contacts’.<sup>55</sup> Another psychological study from the United States in 1962 found that ‘the majority of pedophiles are harmless individuals, and their victims are usually known to be aggressive and seductive’.<sup>56</sup> These remarks hint at a scholarly culture of indifference – but also at justification for ‘victim blaming’ – within sexology towards paedophilia in the mid-twentieth century.

Today, one of the most widely cited definitions is that provided by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), which publishes the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, currently on the fifth edition (*DSM-V*, 2013). The first entry of paedophilia in the *DSM* occurred in the second edition in 1968.<sup>57</sup> This timing reflects the general trajectory in use of the word ‘paedophilia’; although the word was first coined in the late nineteenth century, it was not disseminated widely until the 1960s and 70s. The significance of the APA and the *DSM* extends to Britain. The NHS and the British Psychological Society (Britain’s representative body for the profession) cite the *DSM* as one of two sources for the identification of mental and behavioural disorders in the UK by practitioners (the other, and more widely used, being the World Health

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<sup>55</sup> Alfred C. Kinsey and Alfred C. Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1953), 121.

<sup>56</sup> Eugene Revitch and Rosalee Weiss, ‘The Pedophilic Offender’, *Diseases of the Nervous System* 23, no. 2 (1962): 73–78.

<sup>57</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-II: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Second Edition (Arlington, Virginia: American Psychiatric Association, 1968), 302.2.

Organisation (WHO)'s *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)*).<sup>58</sup> But the APA also represents a tangible example of the ways in which definitions and representations of paedophilia have shifted over time to reflect contemporaneous beliefs – be they clinical, cultural or political. The latest APA manual (*DSM-V*, 2013) defines 'pedophilic disorder' as follows:

Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger).<sup>59</sup>

Forensic psychologist Michael Seto has found that paedophilia is a demographically male condition in more than 90% of cases.<sup>60</sup> The APA finds that prevalence in the total male population for paedophilic 'disorder' is somewhere between 3 and 5%. The manual also states that in order to indicate a paedophilic disorder case, sexual urges must lead to 'clinically significant distress or impairment' in the subject, and that the individual in question must be at least 16 years old and 'at least five years older than the child or children'. Whereas paedophilia is 'lifelong', paedophilic disorder is temporal.<sup>61</sup> These features throw up various questions, both about the definition itself and its application. This is, after all, a restrictive definition because of its psychiatric and clinical nature: it relates specifically to disorder. This means that its use legally, socially, cross-culturally (as a definition from a U.S. organisation) and, in my interest, historically, must be tempered by its context. These ambiguities were reflected in a controversy over the most recent *DSM*, which was amended after the APA had used the terminology 'sexual orientation' to describe

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<sup>58</sup> See Professional Practice Board, 'Diagnosis - Policy and Guidance' (British Psychological Society, 2012), 4.2, 1; for commentary on the prominence of the *ICD* see 'Asperger's Not in DSM-5 Mental Health Manual', *NHS*, 4 December 2012, <https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/aspergers-not-in-dsm-5-mental-health-manual/>.

<sup>59</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*, Fifth Edition (Arlington, Virginia: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 302.2, 697–98.

<sup>60</sup> Michael C. Seto, 'Pedophilia: Psychopathology and Theory', in *Sexual Deviance, Second Edition: Theory, Assessment, and Treatment*, ed. D. Richard Laws and William T. O'Donohue (New York: Guilford Press, 2012), 168.

<sup>61</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-V*, 302.2 (F65.4), 698, 697–98, 699.



paedophilia. Following pressure from public groups, the APA was moved to retract this classification and instead term paedophilia a 'sexual interest'.<sup>62</sup>

The current edition (*DSM-V*, 2013) has made a change by distinguishing between 'pedophilia' and 'pedophilic disorder'. An APA statement downplayed this change by saying that it was made only 'to maintain consistency with the chapter's other listings'.<sup>63</sup> Not only does this hint at the somewhat arbitrary nature of (and institutional influence on) definitional change, but it appears a more significant alteration than the APA intimates. It effectively signals a shift from declaring (as in previous editions ranging from 1968 to 2000) that paedophilia *itself* was the paraphilia or disorder, to asserting that paedophilic *disorder* is the paraphilia (and, in some cases, the act); the APA states in the latest edition that 'pedophilia is a necessary condition for pedophilic disorder'.<sup>64</sup> This distinction leaves open the suggestion that there are some forms of paedophilia that do not necessarily signal disorder – a change since the previous edition in 2000. Forensic psychiatrist Don Grubin has said that 'in only 25–40 percent of offenders is there a recurrent and intense sexual attraction to children that would attract a label of 'paedophilia''.<sup>65</sup> However, the *DSM-V* example is further evidence of how historical changes to definitions in various spheres – this time clinical – have been effected and represented.

To add some further context, homosexuality was only completely removed from the *DSM* in 1987 – the same year that transsexualism was given an entry for the first time.<sup>66</sup> There was some debate amongst the APA membership over whether to include 'hebephilia' (sexual interest in early adolescent children, typically defined as aged between 11 and 14) in *DSM-V*. Advocates for inclusion included contributing editor Ray Blanchard, who felt that the inclusion of hebephilia (or his concept of paedophebephilia, an attraction to children of all ages) could:

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<sup>62</sup> 'APA to Correct Manual: Pedophilia Is Not a "Sexual Orientation"', The Washington Times, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/oct/31/apa-correct-manual-clarification-pedophilia-not-se/>.

<sup>63</sup> American Psychiatric Association, 'Paraphilic Disorders' (American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), 2.

<sup>64</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-V*, 302.2, 699.

<sup>65</sup> From Kleinhans, 'Criminal Justice Approaches to Paedophilic Sex Offenders', 251.

<sup>66</sup> Vivek Datta, 'When Homosexuality Came Out (of the DSM)', *Mad In America*, 1 December 2014, <http://www.madinamerica.com/2014/12/homosexuality-came-dsm/>.

allow the clinician to specify one of three subtypes: Sexually Attracted to Children Younger than 11 (Pedophilic Type), Sexually Attracted to Children Age 11–14 (Hebephilic Type), or Sexually Attracted to Both (Pedohebephilic Type).<sup>67</sup>

This motion was ultimately rejected, which leaves open inconsistencies between the APA's eventual definition and legal frameworks. For example, as explored further on, UK law states that sexual acts on children aged under 16 by an adult aged 18 or over indicate criminal behaviour. This is at odds with the APA's eventual official stance, stated above, which suggests that subjects as young as 16 may hold a paedophilic disorder if they are attracted to (and/or act on this attraction with) children aged five years younger than they are. Further to this, the APA denotes pre-pubescence as a yardstick of victimhood, whereas UK law does not.

The other major international medical definition of paedophilia is provided by the WHO's *ICD*, published in 1993 and most recently updated in 2018. The APA's focus on 'paedophilia' rather than on 'paedophilic disorder' meant that the APA and the WHO differed until 2018. The implication in the APA's definition is that paedophilia itself is not inherently a disorder, unless it leads to actions or distress. For the WHO, though, paedophilia itself *was* the disorder. This again suggests an atmosphere of inconsistency amongst leading health-based institutions, although the 2018 release of *ICD-11* now shows a conversion from 'paedophilia' to 'paedophilic disorder'.<sup>68</sup> This appears to mark a medical break from the commonly held cultural assumption that paedophilia is always harmful. Deep inconsistency has naturally led to uncertainty amongst those within academia (particularly sociologists) who have tried to interpret the issue of paedophilia. Harrison et al. neatly summarised the overall position and differences in stating that 'whilst clinical definitions appear to concentrate on the experience of those positioned as having the mental illness of paedophilia,

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<sup>67</sup> Ray Blanchard et al., 'Pedophilia, Hebephilia, and the DSM-V', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 38, no. 3 (7 August 2008): 335.

<sup>68</sup> World Health Organization, 'Pedophilic Disorder', *ICD-11*, The International Classification of Diseases for Mortality and Morbidity Statistics, 2018, 6D32, <https://icd.who.int/dev11/l-m/en#/http%3a%2f%2fid.who.int%2fcd%2fentity%2f517058174>.

and their clinical symptoms, legal interpretations always require a physical act; rather than just the existence of a sexual preference for children'.<sup>69</sup>

Whilst there has been definitional inconsistency amongst certain clinical institutions, there are numerous studies available on the topic of paedophilia within the wider medical academy. Here I do not look at 'hard' scientific studies but pick a couple of examples of applied approaches (for example, those seeking to recommend best legal practice based on clinical research). Such research has tended to centre around two key domains in relation to paedophilia: classification and treatment (including prevention). These works recognise that in order to recommend effective treatment of offenders, there is first a need to classify and define paedophilia. Michael Seto is one who does not veer too far from the APA or WHO definitions but emphasises pubescence as a key principle: 'sexual contact with postpubertal adolescents up to a legally defined age is prohibited in most jurisdictions; however, these prohibitions are arbitrary in the sense that they vary from country to country'.<sup>70</sup> This is a fair attempt at identifying one of the most problematic issues with paedophilia, namely the relativities of cross-cultural definitions of pubescence. Another attempt to classify is provided by Bickley and Beech's 2001 article 'Classifying Child Abusers', which identifies the 'heterogeneity' of offenders and ensuing difficulty in developing 'effective methods of intervention for these individuals'. The authors, with a joint psychological and criminological approach, put this down to a lack of understanding around why people offend against children.<sup>71</sup> They therefore argue for a reliable classification system that will lead to the best possible treatment for the 'client group' in question.<sup>72</sup> This term – 'client group' – is a revealing terminology that reflects the offender-heavy focus of much work in this area; medical approaches tend to be geared towards treatment of the offender and prevention of their crimes. Other scholars have used empirical case study approaches in their attempts to classify and categorise both

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<sup>69</sup> Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, 'Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of "Paedophilia"', 255.

<sup>70</sup> Seto, 'Pedophilia: Psychopathology and Theory', 165.

<sup>71</sup> James Bickley and Anthony R. Beech, 'Classifying Child Abusers: Its Relevance to Theory and Clinical Practice', *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 45, no. 1 (1 February 2001): 51–69.

<sup>72</sup> Bickley and Beech.

paedophilia and child sexual abusers. A 2008 piece by psychologists Steven Feelgood and Jürgen Hoyer looked at over 700 child molester cases dating from the 1970s in order to assess the state of research in the field. The aim was to determine how far research utilised as categories either socio-legal factors (i.e. offence types) on the one hand, and psychopathological (i.e. disorder-based) on the other in child molester research.<sup>73</sup> They called for a more interdisciplinary approach to the topic that would assist a less reductive approach to paedophilia.

In a 2002 article, psychologists Lisa Cohen and Igor Galynker looked at classification from a slightly different, quantitative approach, assessing data on prevalence of paedophilia, ages of victims and frequency of offences.<sup>74</sup> As with Bickley and Beech, they also emphasised the finding that paedophiles may hold several other types of disorder, and assess the theory that paedophilia in adults may be caused in part by suffering sexual abuse as children. In addition to these causative explorations, Cohen and Galynker conclude that paedophilia is 'extremely difficult' to treat, and that subjects may need lifelong attention from practitioners.<sup>75</sup> In another extensive case study, this time in Scotland, forensic psychiatrists Melanie Baker and Tom White studied the characteristics of 53 sexual offenders (not only child sexual offenders) at a maximum-security state hospital.<sup>76</sup> They too found a link in the subjects between being sexually abused as a child and going on to offend as adults. They also suggested that the best form of treatment could be found in 'pharmacotherapy and a modified cognitive behavioural approach'.<sup>77</sup> These conclusions echoed those offered in an article by U.S. forensic psychiatrist John Bradford (2000). Bradford tied the pharmacology of sexual deviance treatment to wider social concerns about child sexual abuse, labelling it a 'public health problem of staggering proportions'.<sup>78</sup> Whilst Bradford suggested that 'serotonin reuptake inhibitors' could represent

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<sup>73</sup> Steven Feelgood and Jürgen Hoyer, 'Child Molester or Paedophile? Sociolegal versus Psychopathological Classification of Sexual Offenders against Children', *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 14, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 33–43.

<sup>74</sup> Lisa J. Cohen and Igor I. Galynker, 'Clinical Features of Pedophilia and Implications for Treatment', *Journal of Psychiatric Practice* 8, no. 5 (September 2002): 276.

<sup>75</sup> Cohen and Galynker, 276.

<sup>76</sup> Melanie Baker and Tom White, 'Sex Offenders in High-Security Care in Scotland', *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry* 13, no. 2 (September 2002): 285.

<sup>77</sup> Baker and White, 285.

<sup>78</sup> John McDonald Wilson Bradford, 'The Treatment of Sexual Deviation Using a Pharmacological Approach', *The Journal of Sex Research* 37, no. 3 (1 August 2000): 248.

effective treatment for sexual deviance, he conceded that further research in the area was needed.<sup>79</sup> Other scholars have chosen to approach paedophilia from the perspective of preventative measures rather than forensics and treatment.<sup>80</sup> What this short clinical survey shows is that despite high levels of recent medical academic interest in the topic, there has been a real struggle over time for a consistent approach and a workable definition.

### **What is ‘Child Sexual Abuse’?**

The essential reality of adult sexual activity with children is nothing new. Yet ‘child sexual abuse’ is a relatively recent value construct. As such it shares some temporal similarities with the term ‘paedophilia’, but has developed as a different phenomenon – fundamentally relating more to abuse, power and criminality (act) than to disorder and desire (state). Scholars have identified the last two decades of the twentieth century as those in which the ‘dramatic discovery of child sexual abuse’ was made in Britain.<sup>81</sup> One of the findings of this thesis is that there were ways of speaking about adult sexual activity with children before this ‘discovery’, albeit often limited and coded. There is also plentiful evidence to suggest that some cultures regarded such activity as non-abusive and adopted it as normative behaviour. Here I briefly introduce specific historical examples to demonstrate this, and to introduce themes that will be explored in the case studies.<sup>82</sup>

There is widely documented evidence of adult sex with children in the ancient world sourced to Classical Greece, where it was a socially normative – and particularly male – behaviour. Known as *paiderastia*, or pederasty, and involving sexual activity between men and boys no younger than twelve, it

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<sup>79</sup> Bradford, 248.

<sup>80</sup> See for example Goldstein, *The Sexual Exploitation of Children*.

<sup>81</sup> Jenny Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse: Media Influence and Public Understanding of Sexual Violence Against Children* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 32.

<sup>82</sup> A caveat: in touching on Greece, Rome and Renaissance Florence I lean on well-documented examples of adult sexual attraction to and behaviour with children simply to show the longer existing history of such discussions. I could just as easily have chosen examples from Talmudic culture, Christendom, or modern-day India.

became widespread between 600 and 400 BC.<sup>83</sup> In the Greek context, the relationship was framed as a developmental one, with the adult pedagogue taking on a male adolescent student as his protégé. The boys tended to be of noble stock and fell under a teacher's control both educationally and sexually: 'sodomy was considered part of the developmental process leading to adult manhood'.<sup>84</sup> The boys were seen to gain from the relationship both spiritually and pedagogically; the transfer of sperm from teacher to student represented the transfer of knowledge and virtue.<sup>85</sup> Pederasty was accepted both legally and culturally, albeit with rules and limits.<sup>86</sup> Relationships with prepubescent boys were seen as sinful. This did not stop such activity, with sexual abuse of younger children by pedagogues thought to be common, if largely unpunished. There was an upper limit to the relationship, too. The boy student would be a passive member of the pedagogical relationship until the age of seventeen or eighteen (when, supposedly, the first signs of a beard would show), before training as a soldier. At around the age of 25, the adult male would then become the active sodomiser of boys, whilst also maintaining a marriage with a female.<sup>87</sup> Plato decried the lack of autonomy for the passive student: 'as wolves for lambs, so lovers lust for boys'.<sup>88</sup> Greek pederasty came to be popularly viewed as a 'source of tyranny' and was ultimately denormalised.<sup>89</sup> Greek girls – particularly slaves – were also the subjects of sexual attention from adult men, with the settings tending to be warfare and prostitution, rather than education and knowledge.<sup>90</sup>

Under the Roman Empire, sexual relationships between adults and children were related to the imposition of power (on both boys and girls).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See Igor Primoratz, 'Pedophilia', *Public Affairs Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1 January 1999): 99; Cosimo Schinaia, *On Paedophilia* (London: Karnac, 2010), 90; Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 48-54.

<sup>84</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 48; Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 90.

<sup>85</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 90.

<sup>86</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 50.

<sup>87</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 93.

<sup>88</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 52, 54.

<sup>89</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 95.

<sup>90</sup> See Kelly L. Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing the Slave: The Image of the Slave in Ancient Greece* (A&C Black, 2012), 71-77; Kathy L. Gaca, 'Ancient Warfare and the Ravaging Martial Rape of Girls and Women', in *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World*, ed. Mark Masterson, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, and James Robson (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>91</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 96.

Roman law allowed adults 'limitless' control over children.<sup>92</sup> Rather than students, the children subjected to sexual activity tended to be slaves, and 'Romans frowned upon the sexual penetration of free adolescent males'.<sup>93</sup> Replacing the ideal of the transfer of knowledge inherent in the Greek system were expressions of brutality, with sex viewed as a 'means of humiliating enemies and unequals'.<sup>94</sup> Later, as the Christian church began to diffuse in the Middle Ages, so too did a categorical denunciation of sex between men. This put an end to pederasty as a normative activity in Europe – although despite its criminal status the practice still continued widely in Renaissance locations such as Florence.<sup>95</sup> Sex between men and younger girls was not always censured in the same way.<sup>96</sup> England first passed rape laws in 1285. Twelve was classed as the marriageable age, and it was an offence to 'carnally know' a girl – boys were not provided for – under that age.<sup>97</sup> In practice, 'it was left up to nature', and anybody who had attained pubertal maturity could be married off to older men, regardless of the law.<sup>98</sup> Further, any child who had been caught willingly partaking in sexual activity was equally responsible for the act, and the adult would not be prosecuted specifically for having sexual contact with a minor.<sup>99</sup> These laws remained broadly the same until 1865. These examples show the extent to which even ancient cultures performed, considered and discussed adult sexual activity with children, and indeed legislated and structured aspects of social life around it.

Many historians and scholars agree, to a greater or lesser extent and for a variety of reasons, that a critical turn toward the construction of 'child sexual

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<sup>92</sup> Stephen J. Pfohl, "The 'Discovery' of Child Abuse," *Social Problems* 24, no. 3 (February 1, 1977): 310.

<sup>93</sup> Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 87.

<sup>94</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 54.

<sup>95</sup> Randolph Trumbach, 'Renaissance Sodomy, 1500-1700', in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Matt Cook (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 48.

<sup>96</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 97.

<sup>97</sup> Louise Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000), 13.

<sup>98</sup> Martin Killias, 'The Historic Origins of Penal Statutes Concerning Sexual Activities Involving Children and Adolescents', in *Male Intergenerational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological, and Legal Perspectives*, ed. Theo Sandfort, Edward Brongersma, and Alex van Naerssen (London: Harrington Park Press, 1991), 41; Schinaia, *On Paedophilia* 97.

<sup>99</sup> Killias, 'The Historic Origins of Penal Statutes Concerning Sexual Activities Involving Children and Adolescents'. 42.

abuse' as both a prevailing term and a major social issue in the Anglosphere came in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>100</sup> Campaigners and legislatures channelled their concerns in other ways throughout the twentieth century (and before that), but not in such an absolute and structured way.<sup>101</sup> Louise Jackson, for instance, argues that child sexual abuse was 'discovered' further back, noting the importance of Victorian purity movements and that Victorians would have recognised the term 'child sexual abuse' itself.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, an 1834 medical practice journal spoke of 'the abuse and carnal knowledge of a girl under ten years of age' as being 'punishable by death'.<sup>103</sup> Yet feminist activism is cited as the most important factor in the 'uncovering' of child sexual abuse and incest in recent decades.<sup>104</sup> This accelerated in the context of the discovery of 'battered child syndrome' in the postwar period and the resulting growth in child welfare agencies and movements.<sup>105</sup> The movement also developed alongside growing accounts of and studies into child abuse more generally.<sup>106</sup> Key textual feminist examples include Lindy Burton's *Vulnerable Children* (1968), Florence Rush's *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (1980), Judith Herman's *Father-Daughter Incest* (1981), Liz Kelly's *Surviving Sexual Violence* (1988) and Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* (1975).

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<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Pfohl, 'The "Discovery" of Child Abuse', 310; Catherine Itzin, 'Child Sexual Abuse and the Radical Feminist Endeavour: An Overview', in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 1; Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 2; Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 32; Steven Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10, no. 2 (2004): 141; Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present Day* (London: Virago, 2007), 9; Kristin Bumiller, *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 8; Cynthia Crosson-Tower, *Confronting Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse* (London: SAGE, 2014), 10–14; Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle, 'Scandals and Silences: The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse' (History & Policy, 4 August 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/scandals-and-silences-the-british-press-and-child-sexual-abuse>; Adrian Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: The Role of Historians', *History of Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 414; Kelly and Karsna, 'Scoping Report', 5, 9.

<sup>101</sup> See for example the 1920s, when female MPs were first returned to parliament, and in the 1950s when discussions around homosexuality leading up to the Wolfenden Committee of 1957 revealed angst about man-boy sexual behaviours, Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse', 414.

<sup>102</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 3.

<sup>103</sup> 'Abuse, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/821>.

<sup>104</sup> See Brown and Barrett on 'feminist priorities' in the 1970s, Alyson Brown and David Barrett, *Knowledge of Evil: Child Prostitution and Child Sexual Abuse in Twentieth-Century England* (Cullompton: Willan, 2002), 6.

<sup>105</sup> Pfohl, 'The "Discovery" of Child Abuse', 315; Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 45.

<sup>106</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Childism: Confronting Prejudice Against Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 15.



Kristin Bumiller notes the feminist illustration of familial abuse as an attempt to inter the abused 'as a condition of feminine existence'.<sup>107</sup> Florence Rush unambiguously wrote about the patriarchal nature of child sexual abuse: 'male sexual power over women and children is institutionally integrated'.<sup>108</sup> This was emblematic of a wider dialogue on the breaking down of traditional patriarchal values found in family and religion that had led to a more open discussion around sex.<sup>109</sup> Personal memoirs on rape or abuse also became important texts in the 1970s and 80s, particularly when combined with the feminist anti-rape activism of authors such as Brownmiller.<sup>110</sup> The British rape crisis movement (in turn attributed to second-wave feminism), which started in London in the 1970s, has been noted as critical in uncovering incest because one-third of calls to crisis centres were from women who had suffered sexual abuse as children.<sup>111</sup> In 1982, the Women's Liberation Conference had as its theme 'Male Power and the Sexual Abuse of Girls'.<sup>112</sup> American activists and researchers pioneered attempts to quantify child sexual abuse incidence and prevalence. Sociologist David Finkelhor found in 1984 that whilst between 2.5% and 8.7% of men were sexually victimised as children, two to three times as many women were.<sup>113</sup> Where females were therefore suffering more abuse, Finkelhor also found that they were perpetrating far less than men. Of girls who were abused, only 5% of cases were found to have had female perpetrators, whilst for boys the figure was at around 20%.<sup>114</sup> Rebecca Bolen and Diana Russell, the latter of whom has produced significant research on rape and child sexual abuse within the family, came to conclude that Russell's 1986 estimate of 20.6% for the prevalence of child rape was the most accurate.<sup>115</sup> Academic

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<sup>107</sup> Bumiller, *In an Abusive State*, 31.

<sup>108</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 14.

<sup>109</sup> David Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1984), 6.

<sup>110</sup> See for example Louise Armstrong, *Kiss Daddy Goodnight: A Speak-Out on Incest*, First Edition edition (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1978); Charlotte Vale-Allen, *Daddy's Girl* (Island Nation Press, LLC, 2002).

<sup>111</sup> Kira Cochrane, 'Rape Crisis Is 40 – and the Need Is Greater than Ever', the Guardian, 18 December 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/dec/18/rape-crisis-40-years-on>.

<sup>112</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 45.

<sup>113</sup> Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research*, 166.

<sup>114</sup> Finkelhor, 184.

<sup>115</sup> Diana E.H. Russell and Rebecca M. Bolen, *The Epidemic of Rape and Child Sexual Abuse in the United States* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 235; Diana E. H. Russell, *Rape in Marriage*

studies on the statistical presence of child sexual abuse were buttressed by governmental reports, with official state reporting later echoing the claims of feminist activist writers.<sup>116</sup> Such research did not come without counter-claims. Neil Gilbert wrote of the ‘Phantom Epidemic of Sexual Assault’ in 1991.<sup>117</sup> There was also controversy, as I discuss in my third case study on the context to the Cleveland child abuse scandal, concerning the proliferation of ‘self-help’ and repressed memory publications.<sup>118</sup> I argue later that the pre-conditions that facilitated increasing concern about the sexual abuse of children overlapped with those that enabled a platform for self-proclaimed paedophiles to promote sexual activity with a child as non-harmful.

The legal and regulatory definitional framework for abuse in the UK has evolved significantly in the postwar period. There is not space here to summarise in full the legislative change that has occurred relating to types of abuse, offender regulation and prosecution powers.<sup>119</sup> My point is to gesture towards the sheer extent of activity that has in turn made definitional clarity difficult. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states the following under ‘child sex offences’:

‘A person aged 18 or over (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) he intentionally touches another person (B),
- (b) the touching is sexual, and

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(Indiana University Press, 1990); Diana E. H. Russell, *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>116</sup> One such survey, carried out by Lawrence Greenfeld and the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1997, found that in 90% of rapes of children aged under 12, the victim knew the perpetrator, Lawrence A. Greenfeld and United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault* (U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 1997).

<sup>117</sup> Neil Gilbert, ‘The Phantom Epidemic of Sexual Assault’, *Public Interest*, no. 103 (Spring 1991): 54–65.

<sup>118</sup> One major example surrounded the 1988 publication of *The Courage to Heal* by poet Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, which claimed to assist the ‘healing’ of survivors of child sexual abuse, Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (London: Random House, 2002). Later, Elaine Showalter, in her 1998 book *Hystories*, pointed out the problematic nature of repressed memory methods, namely in the possibility that they will draw out ‘false memories’: ‘I have come to doubt the validity of therapeutically recovered memories of sexual abuse, but I do not wish to belittle those who believe in their memories’, Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (London: Picador, 1998), 147.

<sup>119</sup> See Kemshall and McCartan for a useful summary, Hazel Kemshall and Kieran McCartan, ‘Managing Sex Offenders in the UK: Challenges for Policy and Practice’, in *Responding to Sexual Offending: Perceptions, Risk Management and Public Protection*, ed. Kieran McCartan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 208.

(c) either—

(i) B is under 16 and A does not reasonably believe that B is 16 or over,

or

(ii) B is under 13.<sup>120</sup>

The Sexual Offences Act 1956 (the precedent for 2003's Act, amended in 1967 to change the law on homosexuality, 1976 and 1994) had previously provided for crimes relating to 'intercourse with girls under sixteen' – but not with boys.<sup>121</sup> 1956's Act also stated that it is 'a felony for a *man* to have unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of thirteen', not legislating for the possibility of female child sexual offenders.<sup>122</sup> This hints at a number of contextual factors from the 1950s, not least a gender imbalance in the law that continued the habit of the sexual double standard in the UK (with strands, too, of the way the age of consent law change of 1885 provided only for girls, and not boys). By 2003, the word 'intercourse' was replaced with 'rape' (intercourse with a child aged under thirteen is considered to be 'rape' because such children are considered legally incapable of consent), and the updated Act provided for 'children' aged under thirteen rather than 'girls' under sixteen.

The current legislative position throws up a number of uncertainties. One of them surrounds the age brackets denoted. The age of consent in the UK has been sixteen since 1885. As Harrison et al. note: 'children under 13 are always deemed as legally incapable of giving consent; whereas those between the ages of 13 and 15 may 'voluntarily agree' to sexual activity ... This might suggest that paedophilia as constructed in law involves committing offences against those younger than 16'.<sup>123</sup> Whilst the law must necessarily set age boundaries, this is problematic if we consider biological and environmental factors that dictate that not all children are developmentally similar at any given age. The Crown Prosecution Service attempt to mitigate such complexities by offering the following sentencing guidelines based on the SOA 2003 legislation:

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<sup>120</sup> 'Sexual Offences Act 2003', s9(1)(a-c),  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>.

<sup>121</sup> 'Sexual Offences Act 1956', s5, 6,  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/4-5/69/contents>.

<sup>122</sup> 'Sexual Offences Act 1956', s5, 6, emphasis mine.

<sup>123</sup> Harrison, Manning, and McCartan, 'Multi-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of "Paedophilia"', 483, 485.

‘in principle, the younger the child and the greater the age gap between the offender and the victim, the higher the sentence should be. However, the youth and immaturity of the offender must also be taken into account in each case.’<sup>124</sup> The Sexual Offences Act 2003 also legislates for offences relating to child pornography, updating the Protection of Children Act 1978, extending the offence to production and possession of pictures of children under the age of eighteen, rather than sixteen as in 1978.<sup>125</sup> The 1978 Act itself was a replacement for The Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act 1889 (or Children’s Charter), which for the first time allowed the state to prosecute adult cruelty of children.

As awareness and legal discussion of child sexual abuse has expanded, so has an institutional sphere that has sought to investigate non-recent abuse cases, introduce more effective measures for preventing abuse, treating victims, and reduce recidivism in offenders. These institutions are government-funded think tanks, charities and investigatory bodies, amongst others. In parallel, and often in partnership, academic research has been conducted into the extent and impact of child sexual abuse.<sup>126</sup> In a 2014 report on child protection, charitable body the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) gave its definition of child sexual abuse as ‘forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, and whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve both contact abuse ... and non-contact abuse.’<sup>127</sup> This reflected official governmental guidance.<sup>128</sup> The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, opened in 2017, states the same.<sup>129</sup> The IICSA, launched in 2015, takes a slightly

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<sup>124</sup> ‘S5. Rape of Child under 13: Sexual Offences: Sentencing Manual: Legal Guidance: The Crown Prosecution Service’,

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s\\_to\\_u/sentencing\\_manual/s5\\_rape\\_of\\_child\\_under\\_13/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/sentencing_manual/s5_rape_of_child_under_13/).

<sup>125</sup> Sexual Offences Act 2003, s45(1-3).

<sup>126</sup> See for instance the recent partnership (2017-) between the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse and London Metropolitan University.

<sup>127</sup> Child Protection All Party Parliamentary Group, ‘Recommendations for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Better Support for Victims’ (NSPCC, April 2014).

<sup>128</sup> ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children’ (HM Government, March 2015), 93; ‘Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and a Guide for Practitioners, Local Leaders and Decision Makers Working to Protect Children from Child Sexual Exploitation’ (Department for Education, February 2017), 5.

<sup>129</sup> Lorraine Radford, ‘A Review of International Survey Methodology on Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation’ (Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, Connect Centre for

broad definition that ‘encompasses the range of offences, such as grooming, viewing sexual abuse images, and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways’.<sup>130</sup> Nearly all definitions use ‘child sexual abuse’ as an umbrella term that may include attempted or actual rape or penetration, and other types of sexual assault such as sexual touching or ‘non-contact’ abuse. The notion of ‘abuse’ as an umbrella term can indeed be observed as long ago as 1860, when a London *Law Times* report commented that ‘the word abuse is manifestly used as different from the word rape: it may include rape no doubt, or it may not’.<sup>131</sup>

Each constituent nation within the UK sets its own definition of child sexual abuse within its child protection guidelines. These differ subtly but notably. England and Northern Ireland, for example, make reference to the notion that women and children are also capable of perpetrating child sexual abuse; Scotland and Wales do not. Guidelines for each nation are updated at different stages. Wales has not revised its definition of child sexual abuse since 2006, compared to 2015 for England and 2016 for Northern Ireland. Governmental policy strategies and guidance also differ per country.<sup>132</sup> Tellingly, the NSPCC describe this regulatory position as such: ‘there is no standard definition of child sexual abuse’.<sup>133</sup> The existence of different bodies, inquiries, and national standards has meant definitional excesses and difficulties.

A surge in governmental and institutional research that focuses on ‘child sexual exploitation’, a subset of ‘child sexual abuse’ that refers to sexually abusive behaviours involving an element of ‘exchange’, has meant more blurred lines.<sup>134</sup> A 2012 report by the Officer of the Children’s Commissioner drew a

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International Research on Interpersonal Violence, University of Central Lancashire, February 2018), 8–9.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Terms and Phrases Relating to Child Sexual Abuse’, 2.

<sup>131</sup> See usage history under ‘Abuse, N.’

<sup>132</sup> Information taken from NSPCC, ‘Legislation, Policy and Guidance’, NSPCC, <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/legislation-policy-guidance/>.

<sup>133</sup> NSPCC.

<sup>134</sup> See for examples of research into child sexual exploitation M. Melrose and J. Pearce, *Critical Perspectives on Child Sexual Exploitation and Related Trafficking* (London: Springer, 2013); Sophie Hallett, *Making Sense of Child Sexual Exploitation: Exchange, Abuse and Young People* (London: Policy Press, 2017); Angie Heal and Adele Gladman, *Child Sexual Exploitation After Rotherham: Understanding the Consequences and Recommendations for Practice* (London: Jessica

direct link between ‘gangs’, ‘groups’ and child sexual exploitation.<sup>135</sup> Child sexual exploitation has come to represent a quite different category to child sexual abuse: external to the family, publicly discussed, and corrected via historical investigation – rather than familial, private, and spoken of in purely preventative terms. This distinction has been reflected statistically, with a 56% increase in reported child sexual exploitation in England between 2014/15 and 2015/16 alone.<sup>136</sup> In February 2018 the NSPCC criticised the Welsh government for focusing on child sexual exploitation to the point of neglecting ‘more prevalent forms of child abuse’, particularly that within the family. The NSPCC now claims that at least 90% of all sexually abused children are abused by someone that they know.<sup>137</sup> The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, in a 2017 report, admitted that ‘there is no agreed UK definition of CSE’ and that England and Wales indeed operate with different definitions. It also shed light on potential conflation between child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation: ‘for example, locating all sexual abuse in families as CSA precludes sexual exploitation by family members’.<sup>138</sup> There is no lexicographic definition to date for either term, with both the Oxford English and Cambridge Dictionaries including only ‘sexual abuse’, ‘child abuse’ or ‘child molestation’.<sup>139</sup>

Another way that researchers and institutions have sought to define child sexual abuse is by quantifying it. This started in earnest in the United States in the 1980s with the work of researchers such as Finkelhor and Russell. In 2018, the NSPCC claim that one in every twenty UK children has been a

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Kingsley Publishers, 2017); Kelly and Karsna, ‘Scoping Report’; Helen Beckett and Jenny Pearce, *Understanding and Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

<sup>135</sup> Sue Berelowitz et al., “‘I Thought I Was the Only One. The Only One in the World’: Interim Report’ (Children’s Commissioner, November 2012), 19.

<sup>136</sup> Holly Bentley et al., ‘How Safe Are Our Children? The Most Comprehensive Overview of Child Protection in the UK 2017’ (NSPCC, 2017), 29.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Family Sex Abuse “Being Forgotten”’, *BBC News*, 14 February 2018, sec. Wales, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-43048356>.

<sup>138</sup> Kelly and Karsna, ‘Scoping Report’, 5, 7.

<sup>139</sup> See entries for ‘child abuse’ and ‘child molestation’ under ‘Child, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/31619>; ‘Sexual Abuse Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary’, *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sexual-abuse>; ‘Child Abuse Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary’, *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/child-abuse>.

victim of sexual abuse.<sup>140</sup> The Office for National Statistics (ONS), in its most recent study, found that 7% of adults were sexually abused as children (11% of females and 3% of males). Within such statistics are complex matrices plotting abuse (ranging from rape or penetration to indecent exposure) against gender and age range, revealing the challenging extent of abuse type combinations.<sup>141</sup> In 2015/16, the police recorded 53,811 child sexual abuse offences in England and Wales, including rape of a child, other sexual assaults, grooming, exploitation, abuse of trust, and crimes relating to obscene material.<sup>142</sup> 24% of these resulted in a charge or summons.<sup>143</sup> Such statistics reflect an enormous reporting increase when compared with historical records. For example, where there were almost 12,000 reports of rape of a child under 16 in 2015/16 in England and Wales, there were 4,500 in 2004/05. Researchers acknowledge that this kind of statistic does not necessarily mean that abuse itself is on the rise, particularly given the difficulties involved in ascertaining levels of abuse within families. The ONS accredit the higher numbers to a 'renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police'.<sup>144</sup> In 2015 Louise Jackson looked at this same issue with a longer historical lens and drew a similar conclusion, pointing out that the 'incremental increase in statistics ... is most likely a result of the tightening up of police procedures ... (and the recording of complaints)'.<sup>145</sup> In 1984, Finkelhor had considered the possibility that child sexual abuse was in fact declining, thanks to changes that benefited children on a macro level in the law, education and welfare – yet this must be read as conjectural.<sup>146</sup> Rather, advances in technology have meant a window into abuse

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<sup>140</sup> The NSPCC draws this figure from a 2011 study of its own, NSPCC, 'Facts and Statistics', NSPCC, <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/sexual-abuse-facts-statistics/>.

<sup>141</sup> John Flatley, 'Abuse during Childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, Year Ending March 2016' (Office for National Statistics, 4 August 2016), 6.

<sup>142</sup> Kelly and Karsna, 'Scoping Report', 29; There are over 11,000,000 children aged under eighteen in England, see NSPCC, 'Statistics', NSPCC, accessed 26 July 2018, <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/england/statistics/>.

<sup>143</sup> Kelly and Karsna, 'Scoping Report', 33.

<sup>144</sup> Kelly and Karsna, 31.

<sup>145</sup> Louise Jackson, 'Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: Prosecution and Prevalence 1918-1970' (History & Policy, 18 June 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/child-sexual-abuse-in-england-and-wales-prosecution-and-prevalence-1918-1970>.

<sup>146</sup> Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research*, 6–7.

for a wider population. As online abuse and grooming increases in incidence and proportion, so the proportion of familial abuse declines (even if incidence remains broadly the same). The Internet Watch Foundation, which seeks to reduce the level of abuse imagery online, reported 80,318 instances of confirmed abuse images in 2017, a rise of 35% since 2016. Less than 1% of this imagery is hosted by UK web servers.<sup>147</sup>

Attempts to quantitatively measure child sexual abuse have proved as difficult as qualitative definitions. The truth is that we do not know the true extent of child sexual abuse, either currently or historically.<sup>148</sup> To speak of child sexual abuse itself has been a problematic endeavour because, depending on which definition is referred to, it is a wide-reaching umbrella term incorporating ages from zero to eighteen, and different offence types from rape to ‘non-contact’ activity. Whilst these distinctions are being explored in research, particularly in recent years, this has not filtered into definitional clarity on a wider scale. In 2005, cultural theorist Jason Lee was already speaking of a ‘child sexual abuse’ ‘industry’, and since 2012 the level of activity has grown again exponentially.<sup>149</sup> Despite more coverage, more research, and more engagement, definitions have only become baggier, and research statistics harder to read. This has manifested in tangible setbacks for the IICSA in particular, with different inquiry chairs resigning and Soia, a victim’s group, withdrawing from the inquiry due to a lack of trust.<sup>150</sup> In response to this complexity alternative groups have been formed that seek to end confusion and create the best policy outcomes. One of these is the Loudoun Trust, founded in 2012. As the Trust’s mission statement has it, ‘there is great public disquiet about child sex abuse, but there is also profound public ignorance about its causes and about what should be done to prevent it ... we hope that our work may add clarity and greater meaning to the present inquiries and

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<sup>147</sup> ‘Internet Watch Foundation: Annual Report 2017’ (Internet Watch Foundation, 2018), 4–5.

<sup>148</sup> NSPCC, ‘Facts and Statistics’; Jackson, ‘Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: Prosecution and Prevalence 1918-1970’.

<sup>149</sup> CJP Lee, *Pervasive Perversions: Paedophilia and Child Sexual Abuse in Media/Culture* (London: Free Association Books, 2005), 17.

<sup>150</sup> Press Association, ‘Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse “Not Fit for Purpose”, Claims Victims’ Group’, *The Guardian*, 13 June 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/13/inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse-not-fit-for-purpose-claims-victims-group>.



investigations’.<sup>151</sup> This section of the chapter has sought to highlight both this disquiet and struggle for clarity, and has provided theoretical, legislative and political backgrounds that inform the case studies.

### **Who is the Abuser?**

A look at historical narratives on the child sexual abuser reveals metonym and conflation. There has been an enormous amount of scholarly research into ‘paedophiles’, child sex offenders and abusers, cutting across many disciplines and going back to the nineteenth century.<sup>152</sup> The remainder of this section introduces a few key contexts – particularly paedophilia, predators and homosexuality – that serve as further direct grounding for the case studies that follow. A 2017 article by the BBC’s Health Correspondent Catherine Burns introduced the stories of two paedophiles who claimed never to have engaged sexually with children, and wished never to do so in the future.<sup>153</sup> The article is part of a growing set of media portrayals of individuals who are sexually attracted to children. These attempt to ‘unmask’ the abuser and to understand what drives their disorder. On an institutional level, bodies such as the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, offshoot organisation Stop it Now!, and the Specialist Treatment Organization for the Prevention of Sexual Offending (StopSO) target paedophiles and potential abusers to stop abuse at source, and to tackle

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<sup>151</sup> I act as a historical consultant to the Trust. Loudoun Trust, ‘Our Mission’, <http://loudountrust.org.uk/>.

<sup>152</sup> I cannot provide a comprehensive list here but instead give examples across disciplines. See in sexological inquiry Sigmund Freud, “‘A Child Is Being Beaten’: A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions”, 1919, [www.freud-sigmund.com](http://www.freud-sigmund.com); Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, 1931; in criminology see Vandiver, Braithwaite, and Stafford, *Sex Crimes and Sex Offenders*; Rose Ricciardelli and Dale C. Spencer, *Violence, Sex Offenders, and Corrections* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017); in psychiatric studies see Loretta R. Loeb, *The Mind of the Paedophile: Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2018); for clinical and treatment-based studies see Sarah Brown, *Treating Sex Offenders: An Introduction to Sex Offender Treatment Programmes* (London: Routledge, 2013); in sociology see Matravers, *Sex Offenders in the Community*, chap. 5; for policy interventions see Catherine Itzin, ed., *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000), pt. 2; for theoretical discussions see CJP Lee, *Pervasive Perversions: Paedophilia and Child Sexual Abuse in Media/Culture* (London: Free Association Books, 2005); in history see Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain: How the Personal Got Political* (Manchester University Press, 2007); Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (OUP Oxford, 2013).

<sup>153</sup> Burns, ‘The Paedophiles Who Don’t Want to Abuse’.

recidivism by assisting offenders.<sup>154</sup> Juliet Grayson of StopSO controversially suggested in summer 2017 that child sex dolls may be used as an effective method to stop paedophiles from offending 'in real life'.<sup>155</sup> These movements feel significant because they mark an increasing social delineation between individuals who are sexually attracted to children (paedophiles) and those who abuse them.

In much the same way that 'child sexual abuse' and 'paedophilia' have been used as synonymous terms in popular media and elsewhere, so too have paedophiles historically been categorised synonymously with several offender types.<sup>156</sup> As Burns puts it, 'many (paedophiles)... dislike the word "paedophile" because of the way the media uses it interchangeably with "child rapist" or "child abuser"'.<sup>157</sup> Such discussion marks evidence of a growing understanding that not all paedophiles are or become child sexual abusers, and indeed that not all child sexual abusers are paedophiles in that they do not necessarily have an innate sexual attraction to children. Recent research has buttressed such understanding, with a 2017 volume by US criminologists Vandiver, Braithwaite, and Stafford challenging several 'myths' about child sexual abuse and abusers: that offenders target 'any and all' children, rather than a specific group; that all abusers were themselves abused in childhood; that all child sexual abusers are paedophiles; that strangers orchestrate the majority of child sexual abuse; that all abusers are 'monsters'.<sup>158</sup> On the back of findings involving high-profile, prolific abusers, there has been investigation into different kinds and categories of abuser, including those perpetrating child sexual exploitation and abuses of power within institutions.<sup>159</sup> From a police perspective, such delineations are important because of the enormous and increasing strain that services are

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<sup>154</sup> See for instance the Stop it Now! leaflet 'Your First Steps to Getting the Right Support and Advice' (Stop it Now!, n.d.).

<sup>155</sup> Rachel Revesz, 'Paedophiles "Should Be Prescribed Child Sex Dolls"', *The Independent*, 2 August 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/paedophiles-child-sex-dolls-prescription-stop-attacks-child-protection-stopso-therapists-a7872911.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Elena Martellozzo, *Online Child Sexual Abuse: Grooming, Policing and Child Protection in a Multi-Media World* (London: Routledge, 2013), chap. 1.

<sup>157</sup> Burns, 'The Paedophiles Who Don't Want to Abuse'.

<sup>158</sup> See Vandiver, Braithwaite, and Stafford, *Sex Crimes and Sex Offenders*, chap. 4, esp. 91-95.

<sup>159</sup> See for instance the cases involving Jimmy Savile (affected institutions included the BBC and Stoke Mandeville Hospital) and Barry Bennell (affected football clubs included Crewe Alexandra and Manchester City).

under.<sup>160</sup> Simon Bailey, the Head of Operation Hydrant, has suggested that paedophiles who view indecent images online, but do not physically abuse children, should be cautioned and rehabilitated rather than imprisoned.<sup>161</sup>

Like the concept of abuse itself, many historians agree that the image of the child sexual abuser underwent a critical transformation in the 1970s.<sup>162</sup> The crux of feminist thought and research was that 'the myth of stranger danger was found to be a patriarchal ruse', with the bulk of child sexual abuse instead perpetrated by male family members and other male familial acquaintances.<sup>163</sup> This is not, of course, to say that familial abuse narratives began in the 1970s; there are long, well-established narratives relating to incest and the incest taboo.<sup>164</sup> But case studies in this thesis are sited around 1970s debates that picked away quite specifically at the male patriarchal abuser. Historian Deborah Cohen has noted that for feminists, discussing these familial secrets 'required exposing the family skeletons, especially incest, rape and domestic violence'.<sup>165</sup> Yet men being exposed as the majority abusers did not mean that women were written out of abuser narratives, particularly in the media. Itzin has commented that 'when women do what men do, it is always regarded as much worse', and that women are 'blamed and held responsible for men's sexual abuse of children', comments that rang particularly true to me during my research of Myra Hindley and the 1960s Moors murders, and also of female doctors involved in the Cleveland episode of 1987.<sup>166</sup> Nonetheless, with this new research the view of the offender underwent an appreciable shift in activist circles. No longer was the abuser the stranger lurking on a street corner. He was

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<sup>160</sup> See increases in recorded criminal abuse cases detailed in 'What is Child Sexual Abuse?' section above.

<sup>161</sup> 'Do Not Jail All Paedophiles - Police', *BBC News*, 28 February 2017, sec. UK, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39112911>.

<sup>162</sup> See for instance Philip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 71–72; Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 125–58; Angelides, 'The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century'.

<sup>163</sup> Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality', 141.

<sup>164</sup> See Jenny Di Placidi, *Gothic Incest: Gender, Sexuality and Transgression* (Manchester University Press, 2018), 35.

<sup>165</sup> Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Viking, 2013), 231–32.

<sup>166</sup> Itzin, 'Child Sexual Abuse and the Radical Feminist Endeavour: An Overview', 11.

male, and possibly younger than previous stereotypes had allowed. He was 'Everyman', in every home, family and on every street.<sup>167</sup>

At around the same time as the idea of the dangerous familial space was constructed in academic and activist research, the British 'paedophile' narrative evolved. This is in one sense, as I will show in my second case study, a terminological evolution, with the words 'paedophilia' and 'paedophile' themselves beginning to be used popularly in the 1970s during discussions over PIE. The *Collins English Dictionary* provides a trend chart that reveals increasing usage spikes; from almost zero references in 1973 to regular recorded use between then and the present day.<sup>168</sup> Yet beyond lexicography, the 'paedophile', or the 'paedo', has come to serve as a cultural representation of different aspects of child sexual abuse and attraction to children, in an often-conflated and exaggerated manner.<sup>169</sup> In response to the evolving media narrative of the 1970s and 1980s, British researchers started to look into the historical and cultural impact of the 'paedophile'. Historian Philip Jenkins formulated a timeframe for the emergence of the paedophile in the UK, identifying three key 'stages'. From 1976-1982, he argues, paedophiles were drawn from elites, and child pornography was a major menace. Stage 2 (1983-1986) saw the emergence of paedophile 'rings', and links to violence and murder. During Stage 3 (1987-1992) paedophile rings became widespread and subterfuge and disguise were used.<sup>170</sup> The paedophile underwent a sophisticating process in the British public view, accentuated by the technological changes introduced by the Internet. In this way they came to be seen as 'manipulative and merciless'.<sup>171</sup> Jenkins' connection of paedophilia to elite groups has resonated in current-day narratives, with a police inquiry (Operation Midland) investigating non-recent claims about a Westminster political VIP ring. Yet in the 1980s, Jenkins argues,

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<sup>167</sup> Jason Lee, *Celebrity, Pedophilia, and Ideology in American Culture* (New York: Cambria Press, 2009), 23.

<sup>168</sup> See 'Trends of 'paedophile'', 'Paedophile', Collins English Dictionary, <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/paedophile>.

<sup>169</sup> An incident often cited as being representative of 'mass hysteria' about paedophilia in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century involved the daubing of a paediatrician's home in Gwent, Wales, with the word 'paedo' in spray-paint, in a case of mistaken identity. See Brendan O'Neill, 'Whispering Game', *BBC News Magazine*, 16 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4719364.stm>.

<sup>170</sup> See Philip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 71-72.

<sup>171</sup> Ricciardelli and Spencer, *Violence, Sex Offenders, and Corrections*, 31.

the paedophile started to traverse class boundaries, emerging as a ubiquitous figure unattached to any particular social class.

Historian Matt Houlbrook looks further back and identifies the 1920s as the period in which the concept of the 'predatory paedophile' emerged, becoming the 'prevailing norm' of child sex offender by the 1950s.<sup>172</sup> Although his use of the term 'paedophile' here is anachronistic – this was not a term that would have been broadly recognised until the 1970s – Houlbrook shows that public spaces such as cinemas and parks came to be seen as threatening, 'populated by dangerous men who preyed on vulnerable children'.<sup>173</sup> This was not, as I argue later, a trope unique to the mid-twentieth century. The 'predatory' image of the child sex offender heavily echoed Victorian events and campaigns, such as the Jack the Ripper murders and the *Maiden Tribute* newspaper reporting by W.T. Stead that reported on child prostitution on the streets of London. The British predator, meanwhile, had an American cousin: the 'psychopath'. In the United States, as Joanna Bourke has discussed, the psychopath was sexualised by the mass media in the 1930s, leading to nationwide legislative changes amidst fears over the dissolution of the family after the economic crisis.<sup>174</sup> Grave concerns were encapsulated by J. Edgar Hoover's article for *American Magazine* entitled 'How Safe is Your Daughter?', the implication being that she was not very safe at all.<sup>175</sup> Such was the social reach of the psychopath issue that the UCLA Law Review published an article in the 1950s claiming that 'there is probably no criminal today that constitutes a greater danger to the American public than the sexual psychopath'.<sup>176</sup> The majority of US states subsequently passed psychopath laws.<sup>177</sup> Bourke suggests that the 'rise of the sexual psychopath was partly the result of anxieties about

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<sup>172</sup> Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 232.

<sup>173</sup> Houlbrook, 235.

<sup>174</sup> Bourke, *Rape*, 280.

<sup>175</sup> J. Edgar Hoover, 'How Safe Is Your Daughter?', *American Magazine*, July 1947.

<sup>176</sup> Bourke, *Rape*, 281.

<sup>177</sup> See for discussions of this Estelle B. Freedman, *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics: Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 131–32; Laura J. Zilney and Lisa Anne Zilney, *Perverts and Predators: The Making of Sexual Offending Laws* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), chap. 4.

the way economic depression had disrupted family life, triggering concerns about the changing nature of modern manliness'.<sup>178</sup>

Representations of psychopaths and sexual predators came to be deeply associated with homosexuality in the media.<sup>179</sup> Communications scholar Dustin Goltz has it that 'in any critical account of gay and lesbian representation from the mid-twentieth century to the 1990s, the words "villains," "predators," "murderers," "depressed," and "psychopaths" are as common as shoulder pads in a 1980s blazer'.<sup>180</sup> Fears over sexual danger synthesised to create 'the predatory masculine queer', who was seen as a 'corruptive and infectious force' and a threat to children and hence the nuclear family – a particular concern in the build-up to Cleveland.<sup>181</sup> In medical categorisation, homosexuality continued to be considered a paraphilia or disorder until the 1980s.<sup>182</sup> George Haggerty has written that it is 'impossible to speak of homosexuality without invoking the phantom of child molestation'.<sup>183</sup> Diederik F. Janssen argues that the paedophile 'came to replace "the homosexual" in the Anglo-American experience as a paragon of sexual danger to youth'.<sup>184</sup> Research for each of my case studies does reveal strong evidence of a homosexual-paedophile connection in media and activist representations. The 1970s marked increasingly liberalised sexual discussions and emancipatory movements. Sexual rights groups with different agendas, including self-professed paedophiles who wished to reduce or abolish the age of consent, placed themselves under the umbrella of broader movements for sexual freedoms.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Bourke, *Rape*, 280.

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, Houlbrook, *Queer London*, pt. 4; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), chap. 4; F. Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality* (New York: Springer, 2016), chap. 2.

<sup>180</sup> Dustin Bradley Goltz, *Queer Temporalities in Gay Male Representation: Tragedy, Normativity, and Futurity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 30–31.

<sup>181</sup> Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 239; Goltz, *Queer Temporalities in Gay Male Representation*, 31.

<sup>182</sup> Homosexuality only came out of the WHO's ICD in 1992, and out of the DSM altogether in 1987, Datta, 'When Homosexuality Came Out (of the DSM)'; Neel Burton, 'When Homosexuality Stopped Being a Mental Disorder', *Psychology Today*, 18 September 2015, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201509/when-homosexuality-stopped-being-mental-disorder>.

<sup>183</sup> George E. Haggerty, *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 149.

<sup>184</sup> Janssen, "Chronophilia", 579.

<sup>185</sup> See contextual work in the second case study. An excellent study of the connections between the gay left and paedophilia has been written by Lucy Robinson, see Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 129–39. See also NAMBLA in the United States.

The 'category' of the paedophile, argues historian Steven Angelides, thus 'emerged in the 80s as a response to the sweeping challenges to forms of normative masculinity posed by feminism, gay liberation and gay rights and the child sexual abuse movement'.<sup>186</sup> In this way the paedophile was 'homosexualised' amidst a discourse of competing masculinities, and whilst this was not an original connection, 1980s gay rights campaigning was tainted by the new rhetoric of activist paedophilia.<sup>187</sup>

Prevailing sexual representations in the immediate postwar period, then, surrounded the male, often-homosexual stranger, and public focus tended to be on potential for the most violent crimes such rape, abduction and/or murder. The eminence of the predatory type, queer or otherwise, left other (and actually more prevalent) types of adult sex with children 'invisible', particularly that within the family.<sup>188</sup> Such attitudes to familial abuse are captured by a first-hand account from a child sex offender in Tony Parker's moving book *The Twisting Lane* (first published in 1969). Russell George (a pseudonym), a serial offender, had enticed a six-year-old girl – his niece – onto his knee in an upstairs room at a family Christmas party, with her underwear removed. The girl's father walked in. The father said nothing; he picked her up, carried her away, told his wife to get her coat, and left with her and the girl.<sup>189</sup> The family quietly forbade George from attending any more gatherings, but did not report the offences. Although George moved onto picking up girls from toy stores, driving them to secluded like woods or forests, molesting them, and then dropping them back at their homes, he managed to evade prison for many years.<sup>190</sup>

Even 1970s research, with the child sexual offender presented as someone much closer to home, did not shift popular media representations of abusers very far from the stranger-predator model.<sup>191</sup> Familial abusers were difficult to identify, understand, manage and represent, leading to confusion and

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<sup>186</sup> Angelides, 'The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century', 272.

<sup>187</sup> See for older examples particularly the resurgence in 'Greek love' or 'boy love' promoted by Oscar Wilde and the Uranian poets of the late nineteenth century.

<sup>188</sup> Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 236.

<sup>189</sup> Tony Parker, *The Twisting Lane: Some Sex Offenders* (London: Panther, 1970), 32.

<sup>190</sup> For full account see Parker, 15-43.

<sup>191</sup> Studies suggest that strangers perpetrate only 5% of cases. See Anneke Meyer, 'Evil Monsters and Cunning Perverts: Representing and Regulating the Dangerous Paedophile', in *Popular Culture, Crime and Social Control*, ed. Mathieu Deflem (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, 2010), 207.

concern in the 1980s. This manifested in the Cleveland crisis of 1987, in which parents (and the media) strongly challenged accusations of abuse against their children. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, although fathers, other male relatives and family friends are understood to be the primary offenders, this kind of abuser is underrepresented, and the media tend to foreground more prominent or shocking figures. In 2004 Kitzinger found that 96% of newspaper articles on how to protect children focused on the threat from strangers as opposed to people known to the victim.<sup>192</sup> In the 1990s there was an eruption of concern about paedophiles that has been described as a 'moral panic', culminating in a *News of the World* press campaign to have all paedophiles within communities 'named and shamed'.<sup>193</sup> Filmmaker Chris Morris infamously mocked this in his satirical television documentary *Brass Eye* (2001), with an episode named 'Paedogeddon!' taking aim at mainstream media reactions to paedophilia.<sup>194</sup> It received the most ever complaints for a UK television show at that time. Morris felt that 'if you deal with ... paedophilia, then you're dealing with something where people's brains are nowhere near the point of debate ... that's why you can get [people] to say that paedophiles are like crabs, because they've never given the subject any thought'.<sup>195</sup> Morris' comments cut to the subjective, emotive and often unspoken – or otherwise coded – responses to paedophilia that are the kernel of this thesis.

Over-representation of 'stranger danger' occurs in the media due to the difficulty in representing someone who could be *anyone*. It is much easier and has more impact for the media to represent individuals that stand out. As Liz Kelly has put it, 'the safer terrain of "abnormalities" beckons'.<sup>196</sup> This even comes down to dress; paedophiles *appear* odd in the public imagination: 'dirty trench coat, oversized NHS glasses and lank, thinning hair', as a 2015 magazine

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<sup>192</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 128.

<sup>193</sup> See for example Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain*; Yvonne Jewkes, *Media and Crime*, Key Approaches to Criminology (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 76; Frank Furedi, 'The Moral Crusade against Paedophilia', in *Revisiting Moral Panics*, ed. Vivienne E. Cree and Gary Clapton (London: Policy Press, 2016), 201–16.

<sup>194</sup> Tristram Shapeero, 'Paedogeddon!', *Brass Eye* (Channel 4, 26 July 2001).

<sup>195</sup> Owen Gibson, 'Brass Eye "Unlikely to Return", Says Morris', *The Guardian*, 21 February 2003, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/feb/21/broadcasting>.

<sup>196</sup> Jenny Kitzinger, 'The Ultimate Neighbour from Hell? Stranger Danger and the Media Framing of Paedophiles', in *Social Policy, the Media and Misrepresentation*, ed. Bob Franklin (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), 219.



article had it, also featuring a picture of Jimmy Savile.<sup>197</sup> Journalist-turned-professor of Media Jon Silverman and criminologist David Wilson have summed up the paedophile 'as the bogeyman of our age'.<sup>198</sup> There has been strong criticism of the media's role in this construction. Kitzinger feels that 'the media propagate unhelpful stereotypes that abusers are 'psychotic' strangers and ignore the more common familial abuse'.<sup>199</sup> Jason Lee argues that the paedophile has been 'glamourised'.<sup>200</sup> Moral panic theorist Chas Critcher attacks the 'crass stereotypes' of the paedophile – 'twisted', 'weirdo', 'loner', and 'monster' – which make out child sexual abusers as a subspecies of humanity.<sup>201</sup> In reality, the familial male abuser – the 'ordinary heterosexual man' – is just as 'monstrous' or 'perverted' as the 'paedophile', and the impact of his abuse can be even more disastrous than that of a stranger's.<sup>202</sup> Simply, the 'figure of the stranger paedophile fundamentally misrepresents the spaces and sources of danger'.<sup>203</sup> And yet, child sexual attacks by strangers can and do occur, catastrophically so. In the next chapter, I explore how the Moors murders played on, and then affected, British fears about stranger danger and the nature of offenders.

## Who is the Child?

Many of the debates around child sexual abuse documented in this thesis reflect aspects of *adult* behaviours, fears and norms. The child's world – regrettably, given that it is the child who suffers most directly from sexual abuse – has often been elided from narratives, or otherwise exploited for adult purposes. In Cleveland in 1987, a large element of the child sexual abuse crisis saw adults wrangling over the damage being done to their institutions (such as family and

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<sup>197</sup> Adam Forrest, 'Why Do We Assume Paedophiles Look a Certain Way?', *Vice*, 4 February 2015, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/nnqpg7/stereotypical-paedophile-look-189](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/nnqpg7/stereotypical-paedophile-look-189).

<sup>198</sup> Jon Silverman and David Wilson, *Innocence Betrayed: Paedophilia, the Media and Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 1.

<sup>199</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 125.

<sup>200</sup> Lee, *Celebrity, Pedophilia, and Ideology in American Culture*, 9.

<sup>201</sup> Chas Critcher, *Critical Readings: Moral Panics And The Media* (London: McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2006), 144.

<sup>202</sup> Catherine Itzin, 'Incest, "Paedophilia", Pornography and Prostitution: Conceptualising the Connections', in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 97.

<sup>203</sup> Meyer, 'Evil Monsters and Cunning Perverts', 207.

state), and over who should be responsible for child protection and regulation. Such schisms contributed to a considerable (and not necessarily beneficial) impact on notions of British childhood.<sup>204</sup> This critical neglect of the child is down in part, I argue, to its nebulous nature. Childhood is a concept that has eluded easy definition and refinement. Even to consider childhood an umbrella term means to anticipate significant differences *within* childhood – to take one example, pubescence and pre-pubescence. The age of menarche is ‘overwhelmingly’ thought to have fallen since the Victorian period, but there is no such thing as an ‘average’ child, with factors such as ‘race, class and possibly climate’ impacting on puberty.<sup>205</sup> Even then, puberty alone is not an absolute indicator of an ability to consent. And an ability to consent alone does not mark an absolute departure from childhood. Some scholars argue that childhood and adolescence should be considered separately.<sup>206</sup> Others have argued that childhood did not, does not, or should not exist at all.<sup>207</sup> As sociologist Chris Jenks has asked, succinctly summarising the lack of consensus in one question, ‘in what ways can we possibly begin to make sense of children?’<sup>208</sup> Current-day perspectives offer some insight, but also incertitude.

The *OED* lists sixteen definitions of ‘child’, ranging from ‘a young person of either sex, usually one below the age of puberty; a boy or girl’, to ‘an immature, irresponsible, or childish person’, to ‘a son or daughter’.<sup>209</sup> The United Nations, with a definition ratified by the UK, states that the child is ‘every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the

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<sup>204</sup> See the Children Act 1989.

<sup>205</sup> For discussion of the intersection between age, puberty, sexuality and age of consent law, see Victoria Bates, ‘The Legacy of 1885: Girls and the Age of Sexual Consent’ (History & Policy, 8 September 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/the-legacy-of-1885-girls-and-the-age-of-sexual-consent>.

<sup>206</sup> See for example Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1; Bullough, ‘History in Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents in Western Societies’, 69-90.

<sup>207</sup> See Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982); ‘Modern Childhood “Ends at Age of 12”’, *BBC*, 6 March 2013, sec. Education & Family, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21670962>; for 1970s pro-paedophile views on why the age of consent should be abolished, see my discussion of PIE in the second case study of this thesis.

<sup>208</sup> Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 2.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Child, N.’

child, majority is attained earlier'.<sup>210</sup> If childhood is defined by the age at which sexual majority is attained, the UK's legal position shows an age of consent of sixteen years old – although it also states that 'anyone under the age of 13 can never legally give consent'.<sup>211</sup> But due to inconsistencies, legislation is a difficult area from which to draw precise notions of the child. To give one example, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 classes 'sexual activity with a child' as that involving children aged less than sixteen, but the meaning of a child for the purposes of pornographic abuse is anyone under the age of eighteen.<sup>212</sup> In terms of criminal responsibility, the age at which a child can be prosecuted in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is ten. In Scotland, it is twelve.<sup>213</sup> Such inconsistencies have a ripple effect, contributing to some of the definitional difficulties surrounding paedophilia, abuse and the abuser outlined above. This final section cannot offer a comprehensive overview of all that has been said about childhood in scholarship and literature, but it surveys a few key thematic contexts that will recur in the case studies, particularly around the construction of the child, child protection, the age of consent, and the child as sexual agent.

Childhood, many historians have argued, was not constructed as a category distinct from adulthood until the seventeenth or eighteenth century.<sup>214</sup> Philippe Ariès, oft-cited as the leading proponent of that view, suggested in 1960 that 'childhood' was non-existent in medieval times, that the child was not portrayed as a 'child' in art until around the sixteenth century, and was not conceived of more broadly until the following century.<sup>215</sup> Cultural polemicist Neil Postman, somewhat sweepingly, stated that if we consider the definition of a child as a person between the ages of seven and seventeen, requiring protection, and as distinct from adults, then 'the child' is only 400 years old.<sup>216</sup> The 'combined effort' behind this 'new category of personhood – the child' were, according to historian Harry Hendrick, 'Rousseau, the Romantics and the

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<sup>210</sup> UN General Assembly, 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1989).

<sup>211</sup> NSPCC, 'A Child's Legal Rights: Legal Definitions', NSPCC, <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/legal-definitions/>.

<sup>212</sup> Sexual Offences Act 2003, s9(1), s45(2).

<sup>213</sup> NSPCC, 'A Child's Legal Rights: Legal Definitions'.

<sup>214</sup> See for summary and exponents of this view R. Egan and Gail Hawkes, *Theorizing the Sexual Child in Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13.

<sup>215</sup> See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

<sup>216</sup> Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, xi.

Evangelicals [who] cast children into the Enlightenment melting pot'.<sup>217</sup> Some have placed the roots of childhood in Renaissance art, arguing that children were beginning to be depicted as innocent adolescents, although it took until the seventeenth century for sympathetic images of the child to become disconnected from religion.<sup>218</sup> Others saw literature as the critical factor. Postman, for instance, pointed to the advent of the Gutenberg Press as the point at which adults began to leave children behind. The printing press created the 'Literate Man': 'in a literate world children must *become* adults'. Before literature was widespread, everyone – adults and children – had access to the same information.<sup>219</sup>

Prior to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the young were associated with sin, and were made 'the scapegoats on whom adults vented their lust, authoritarianism, political-religious resentment, superstitions and fears'.<sup>220</sup> French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's character *Émile* (1762) represented the innocence of the child; Rousseau wanted children to be seen as free and independent, and for adults to judge children on their personalities.<sup>221</sup> From being seen as laden with original sin from birth and subjected to harsh discipline as a form of correction, the child was now born innocent of the 'ugly' traits of adulthood – sexuality being one of them. Until that point, Ariès argued, children were treated as miniature adults and assumed adult sexual roles early in life. This included dressing as adults, and being exposed to adult conversation within the home and family environment: 'everything was permitted in [children's] presence: coarse language, scabrous actions and situations; they heard everything and saw everything'.<sup>222</sup> With no segregation of adult and child life, no distinct category of childhood existed.<sup>223</sup> Indeed, 'the further we go back in history, the less consideration is given to the child, and the more frequently

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<sup>217</sup> Egan and Hawkes, *Theorizing the Sexual Child in Modernity*, 13; Harry Hendrick, 'Introduction: Child Welfare: The Historical Background', in *Child Welfare and Social Policy: An Essential Reader*, ed. Harry Hendrick (London: Policy Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>218</sup> Daniel Thomas Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 24; Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 102.

<sup>219</sup> Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, 13.

<sup>220</sup> Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 105.

<sup>221</sup> Schinaia, 106; Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer*, 29.

<sup>222</sup> See, for this summation of Ariès' views, Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 103.

<sup>223</sup> Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*, 25.

the child is murdered, abandoned, beaten, terrified, and subjected to sexual abuse ... [but] since a feeling of childhood does not exist, paedophilic behaviour or sexual abuse quite simply cannot exist either'.<sup>224</sup>

Whilst the debate has evolved, Ariès' ideas on the construction of childhood remain the centre of gravity for many scholarly discussions. Historian Linda Pollock has searched for the 'forgotten child' of prior centuries, finding 'humane and optimistic' evidence in sixteenth-century diaries and memoirs for parental love and child-rearing practices. She feels that the child was present in previous centuries, 'although children may not necessarily have been viewed in the same way as children today'.<sup>225</sup> Others have found 'almost inconceivable' the notion that parents were predominantly indifferent or cruel to their children.<sup>226</sup> Recent scholarship has self-reflexively tried to frame histories of childhood and childhood sexuality within their own productive limits. Childhood histories written in the last three decades reflect their own contexts and concerns, being imbued with adult anxieties about child sexuality and the child's supposed need for protection.<sup>227</sup> Egan and Hawkes call for an increased awareness of the 'sexual subjectivity' in historiographies of the child.<sup>228</sup> Gender and social and political status are increasingly becoming critical success factors in childhood histories, and 'discussions of the child that do not take gender into account can quickly become meaningless'.<sup>229</sup> Despite these movements, some historians continue to believe that the eighteenth century marked 'a new world for children'.<sup>230</sup>

Victorian Britain became a key contributor to that 'new world', being the source of legal, social and cultural representations that redefined the way that children, and adult sex with children, were viewed and arranged.<sup>231</sup> Here I

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<sup>224</sup> See, for this summation of Ariès' views, Schinaia, *On Paedophilia*, 103.

<sup>225</sup> See Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>226</sup> David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York: Harper, 1970), 49.

<sup>227</sup> See for a summary of this thinking Emma Renold, R. Danielle Egan, and Jessica Ringrose, 'Introduction', in *Children, Sexuality and Sexualization* (New York: Springer, 2016), 2.

<sup>228</sup> Egan and Hawkes, *Theorizing the Sexual Child in Modernity*, 13.

<sup>229</sup> Heather Montgomery, *An Introduction to Childhood: Anthropological Perspectives on Children's Lives* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 53, 54.

<sup>230</sup> See for instance Hendrick, 'Child Welfare and Social Policy', 8.

<sup>231</sup> See Michael Pearson, *The Age of Consent: Victorian Prostitution and Its Enemies* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972); James Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian*

discuss historiographical perspectives on this impact, touching on legislation (the age of consent change of 1885), social debate (media campaigns that challenged child prostitution) and cultural production (the way that childhood was refigured) that have had an enduring impact, with traces found in research for this project's case studies. Whilst the romantic, innocent child had become more prevalent in literature since the mid-century, it also had an 'evil twin': the juvenile delinquent.<sup>232</sup> Scholars of childhood Emma Renold, R. Danielle Egan and Jessica Ringrose have noted the historical Anglophone engrossment with 'the innocent or sexually endangered child and its socially pathologized counterpart, the erotic or sexually knowing child'.<sup>233</sup> This dichotomy intersected with class, education and gender, topics that make constructing a singular Victorian definition of childhood highly challenging.<sup>234</sup> The juvenile delinquent, generally working-class, was tied up in sinful activities: for boys, theft, for girls, sex and specifically prostitution.<sup>235</sup> Some mothers knew about – or encouraged – their child's sex work on the streets, and expected money from such activity to be returned to the running of the household.<sup>236</sup> The innocent child, meanwhile, largely a middle-class projection, became separated from adulthood thanks in part to the increase in specific childhood items and spaces, such as toys, games, children's literature, the nursery, and the nanny who looked after these. This child became a source of pleasure and attention for the family – though also encountered the abuser within the home.<sup>237</sup>

Debates over the innate morality or immorality of the child were closely connected to sexual knowledge. Amidst a wider fetishisation of innocence and purity, the virgin was eroticised, particularly in visual culture.<sup>238</sup> The market

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*Literature* (London: Routledge, 1992); Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*; David Buckingham, *After the Death of Childhood* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 8; Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*.

<sup>232</sup> Rousseau, Dickens and Wordsworth have been cited as key literary figures in producing the innocent child, often as a totem of anti-industrialism; see Buckingham, *After the Death of Childhood*, 8; for discussion of the 'evil twin' see Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 6.

<sup>233</sup> Renold, Egan, and Ringrose, 'Introduction', 3.

<sup>234</sup> See for example Ginger S. Frost, *Victorian Childhoods* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 4.

<sup>235</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 6.

<sup>236</sup> Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 29; Bourke, *Rape*, 221.

<sup>237</sup> Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*, 26.

<sup>238</sup> See Elodie Silberstein, 'Between Innocence and Experience: The Sexualisation of Girlhood in 19th Century Postcards', *The Conversation*, 13 December 2017,

value for sex with a virginal girl was accordingly high, and some families would sell their child for up to £25 a night. For the girl this marked the onset of the 'fall' from innocence.<sup>239</sup> Vern Bullough has pointed to the pseudonymous accounts of a man named 'Walter', collated in his sprawling sexual memoir *My Secret Life*, to show that there was no specific category of 'paedophile'.<sup>240</sup> One of Walter's entries tells of an encounter with two young teenaged girls. Approaching them in the street, he asked: "Have you any hair on your cunt?" One replied: "Only a little, Sir, but she has none – have you Louey? ... Come with us."<sup>241</sup> Walter also implored his male readers to have no 'compunctions of conscience' about having sex with virginal girls, as they would be performing the role of 'agent in the inevitable'.<sup>242</sup> Any accusations of abuse from working-class children were often seen as reflections of their own inherently deceitful, impure nature and were mistrusted.<sup>243</sup> Victorians, according to Florence Rush, were 'obsessed with defloration'. Once a girl had lost her virginity – whether by choice or not – she became a so-called 'fallen woman', unavailable for marriage, with a working life in prostitution a likely prospect.<sup>244</sup>

Louise Jackson is one historian to identify the ways in which child sexual abuse – channelled through the issues of child prostitution and the age of consent – became a social concern in the late nineteenth century.<sup>245</sup> Philanthropic individuals and institutions, purity and child welfare campaigning, and narratives of sexual danger abounded. Increased literacy rates and the works of writers such as Dickens brought the harsh state of life as a child in industrial Britain under the spotlight. Child prostitution gained enormous coverage in the media, with campaigners such as social reformer Josephine Butler and the journalist and editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, W.T.

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<http://theconversation.com/between-innocence-and-experience-the-sexualisation-of-girlhood-in-19th-century-postcards-87328>.

<sup>239</sup> Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 30–31.

<sup>240</sup> Bullough, 'History in Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents in Western Societies', 75.

<sup>241</sup> Pearson, *The Age of Consent*, 29.

<sup>242</sup> Bullough, 'History in Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents in Western Societies', 75.

<sup>243</sup> Bourke, *Rape*, 29–32.

<sup>244</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 61.

<sup>245</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*.

Stead, attempting to reveal the true nature of sex on Victorian streets.<sup>246</sup> Prostitution itself had already been considered the Victorian period's 'Great Social Evil', but Stead's investigative campaigning in the *Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885) created fresh consternation in the public.<sup>247</sup> His reportage included interviews with 'landladies' of brothels involved in the abduction, chloroforming and selling of girls for sex: 'they lie almost as if dead, and the girl never knows what has happened till morning. And then? Oh! then she cries a great deal from pain, but she is 'mazed, and hardly knows what has happened'.<sup>248</sup> Stead staged an abduction of a thirteen-year-old girl who was at threat of prostitution and abuse, and he ended up in jail for three months.<sup>249</sup> An unpublished article for *The Times* (1886) showed that 'parents and politicians alike took the problem of sexual assault upon children more seriously after the summer of 1885'.<sup>250</sup> The most tangible impact was a change in the age of consent law (under the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885), which saw the female age (boys were not mentioned in law until 1913) pushed up to sixteen. Stead himself was phlegmatic and felt this would make little difference.<sup>251</sup> Historians have debated the legislation's legacy.<sup>252</sup> Julia Laite has commented on the 'unprecedented' – and 'overwhelmingly negative' – impact of such legal interventions on women who have sold sex since.<sup>253</sup> Kim Stevenson has noted how the 1885 age of consent amendment has 'held fast albeit it is now at odds with the practical reality of teenage sexual experience'.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Brown and Barrett, *Knowledge of Evil*, 6.

<sup>247</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 32.

<sup>248</sup> W.T. Stead, 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon I: The Report of Our Secret Commission', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 July 1885, <https://attackingthediabol.co.uk/>.

<sup>249</sup> Bullough, 'History in Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents in Western Societies', 76.

<sup>250</sup> Kim Stevenson, "'Not Just the Ideas of a Few Enthusiasts': Early Twentieth Century Legal Activism and Reformation of the Age of Sexual Consent", *Cultural and Social History* 14, no. 2 (15 March 2017): 224.

<sup>251</sup> Stevenson, 224.

<sup>252</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*; Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*; Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001), chap. 3; Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), chap. 3; Bates, 'The Legacy of 1885'.

<sup>253</sup> Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 4, 212.

<sup>254</sup> Stevenson, "'Not Just the Ideas of a Few Enthusiasts'", 233.



By the end of the century, British children were being viewed more sympathetically – though not universally – as the ‘future’, and their welfare and protection had become important tenets of society.<sup>255</sup> Moral discourses concerned with the lifestyles of Britain’s children and adolescents reverberated in twentieth-century debates over child sexuality, behaviour and dress, particularly in the ‘permissive’ 1960s, as I shall show in my first case study. Victorian movements also prefigured 1970s and 1980s debates about responsibility for the child. With 1885’s age of consent reform campaign, the media and the state took child protective measures forward in the face of a public sexual health crisis. This measured up with increasingly influential movements in Victorian charity and philanthropy. Strong echoes of this moment can be seen in the Cleveland 1987 debates, when family-state ruptures occurred over the responsibility for the abused child. Those later debates also occurred amidst a wider and growing concern for the child, and also contributed to landmark legislation.<sup>256</sup> As for language, ‘paedophilia’ was not an established public concept in the late nineteenth century. Instead, sources such as the *Maiden Tribute* show us different but still striking forms of representation of adult sex with children, in that case through the lens of child prostitution in London. Although there was limited medical or institutional vocabulary to approach issues such as child prostitution and adult sex with children more generally, there was still representation, and as seen in the example of the *Maiden Tribute*, opprobrium. In this way, as Bingham and Settle have argued, ‘the moral grandstanding and sensational language of the Stead campaign has many echoes today’.<sup>257</sup>

Victoria Bates has argued that although sexual consent law is today primarily aimed at challenging abuse and exploitation, one motivating factor behind the 1885 alteration (along with child protection) was the perceived need to curb and regulate ‘juvenile sexualities’, a reference to fears about the sinful, ‘sexually knowing’ child.<sup>258</sup> Concepts of the sexual child expanded from realms

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<sup>255</sup> Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, 1.

<sup>256</sup> See for example Childline or the Children in Need movements; the Children Act 1989 is often attributed in part to the Cleveland debates, see ‘The Central Child’ section in third case study.

<sup>257</sup> Bingham and Settle, ‘Scandals and Silences’.

<sup>258</sup> Bates, ‘The Legacy of 1885’.

of religious thinking and culture and into medicine. The Freudian narrative of child sexuality, started with *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), argued that even infants had sexual inclinations that manifested in physical expressions such as thumb sucking. Childhood sexuality, Freud argued, was a natural stage of psychosexual development: humans are sexual beings from a very young age, they desire their parents sexually, and their experiences in this infant, sexualised period impact upon their later development and personality.<sup>259</sup> It came to be widely accepted that children have erogenous zones and sexual feelings.<sup>260</sup> Ever since such discussions, according to Diederik F. Janssen, the 'sexual child' has been an '*idée fixe*'.<sup>261</sup> Krafft-Ebing also documented his theories on the 'sexual instinct in children'. In one cited case, he wrote of an eight-year-old girl from a respectable family who, having masturbated since the age of four and 'consorted' with boys, considered killing her parents so that she could 'become her own mistress' and seek pleasure with men. Another example described two sisters with 'premature and perverse sexual desire'. The elder girl masturbated from the age of seven, 'practiced lewdness with boys', and masturbated herself with the cassock of a priest who had been sent to 'reform' her.<sup>262</sup>

Just as childhood has been historiographically 'discovered', so too can it be 'disappeared'. Postman lamented this 'disappearance of childhood' amidst increasing child sexualisation in the twentieth century: 'the charm, malleability, innocence, and curiosity of children are degraded and then transmogrified into the lesser features of pseudo-adulthood'.<sup>263</sup> Silverman and Wilson, too, have noted modern pressures on children – especially girls – to become 'adult' sooner. They note that the 'discovery' of paedophilia in Britain went hand-in-hand with the sexualisation of children in other areas of life, using the example of Tierney Gearon's exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in 2002 (and the ensuing

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<sup>259</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Fine Books, 2011).

<sup>260</sup> See Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality'; Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*.

<sup>261</sup> Diederik F. Janssen, 'Anthropologizing Young/Minor Sexualities', in *Children, Sexuality and Sexualization*, ed. Jessica Ringrose (New York: Springer, 2016), 22.

<sup>262</sup> Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1998, 36–37.

<sup>263</sup> Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, xiii.

uproar) which included pictures of her own children, naked but for masks.<sup>264</sup> Daniel Cook has pinpointed the period between 1917 and 1962 to highlight the escalating relationship between childhood, consumerism and modernity, in which children continue to become symbols of commodification, sexualised for commercial gain, enfranchised with consumer rights, and possessing an increasingly influential cultural voice.<sup>265</sup>

Here was a cultural paradox: the 'sexualisation' of children on the one hand, and the increased drive towards child protection on the other.<sup>266</sup> For at the same time, the 1970s has been cited as a critical moment in the 'reversal' of the Freudian sexual child in the Anglosphere. Angelides has written that '1970s activists seeking to reveal and quantify the levels of sexual violence against women and girls did much to bring about a shift in views of the child as a sexualised, willing agent and therefore complicit in the act of child sexual abuse, to a non-consenting (by nature), desexualised victim'.<sup>267</sup> Feminist critics such as Florence Rush and Elaine Showalter attacked Freud and his contemporaries for their 'cover-up' of child sexual abuse as Oedipal conflicts rather than real events.<sup>268</sup> Whilst Freud's examples and theories 'sexualised' the child, they argued, they did nothing to protect them from abuse and humiliation. Rather, his ideas 'allowed for the suppression and concealment of the sexual exploitation of the female child'; the girl's *nature* made her culpable, rather than her personal morality, and she had therefore been incriminated in 'abuse' just as much as the offender.<sup>269</sup> Further, 'the place of the child and the complexity of its sexual subjectivity became increasingly marginalized and silenced'.<sup>270</sup> As such, 'child sexuality becomes an oxymoron in the feminist narrative'.<sup>271</sup> It was into this 1970s space, as I shall discuss, that PIE drew on Freudian threads to

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<sup>264</sup> Silverman and Wilson, *Innocence Betrayed*, 40, 39.

<sup>265</sup> Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood*, see esp. 'Introduction'.

<sup>266</sup> See for a comprehensive interdisciplinary volume on child sexualisation Jessica Ringrose, ed., *Children, Sexuality and Sexualization* (New York: Springer, 2016).

<sup>267</sup> Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality', 142.

<sup>268</sup> Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 80–104; Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research*, 11.

<sup>269</sup> Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, 187; Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 80, 103–4.

<sup>270</sup> Egan and Hawkes, *Theorizing the Sexual Child in Modernity*, 123.

<sup>271</sup> Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality'. 142.

argue that children were indeed inherently sexual beings from birth and should therefore be liberated sexually, by way of abolition of the age of consent.

## Conclusion

Language matters. Words matter. Labels, pedantic as they can be, matter. They matter because they convey not only meaning, but also tone, significance, and content ... Not only do shortcomings exist in formal legal terms, but the terminology in public discussion is also insufficiently descriptive.<sup>272</sup>

Leary's words seem a fitting summation of the multidisciplinary definitional struggles that have orbited the issue of child sexual abuse both recently and non-recently – and of the importance of those struggles. This chapter has looked at four issues that are inextricably linked – paedophilia, abuse, the abuser, and the child – and has asked how groups have constructed and arranged meanings for these, both linguistically and epistemologically. 'Paedophilia', I found, is a notion relating to human disorder that has been interpreted in various ways since its origins in obscure Victorian-era sexology, through a series of inconstant psychiatric definitions, to wide usage amidst a so-called 'moral panic' facilitated by latter-day media. I have agreed with many other historians that 'child sexual abuse', in current understandings, is a relatively recent term dating to feminist activism in the 1970s. However, sexually abusive behaviours towards children have been a constant throughout human history, with concern about it being expressed more and less urgently during different historical moments. We are living through an urgent moment now. The child sexual 'abuser' has been given several masks. I charted perspectives that ascribed predatory narratives to paedophiles and abusers, such as the marauding 'queer' of postwar Britain and the 'stranger danger' model of paedophile. I found that even though research overwhelmingly points towards the familial or 'known' abuser being the most common type, media and police narratives continue to focus on less prevalent but more vivid threats. Finally, I noted the difficulties there have been in defining childhood and the child, charting twentieth-century

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<sup>272</sup> Leary, 'The Language of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation', 109, 117–18.

historiography's 'discovery' of childhood in the Enlightenment era. I cited Victorian London as an exemplar for the way that rich discussions about the innocent, knowing, and sexual child have come to shape and be shaped by later concern for the child, which I document in the next three chapters. What binds the four topics, apart from their constitutive connection to child sexual abuse, is a long history of definitional uncertainty and flux, according to context, geography, and discipline. The case studies that follow display the ways in which this uncertainty unfolded over the second half of the British twentieth century, and are underpinned by the specific themes explored in this chapter.

## Chapter Two

### Unspeakable Acts: Media Representations of the Moors Murders, 1965-67

#### Introduction

I am trying to make clear the extraordinary psychological effect this case had on any introspective spectator. It threw us all out of kilter: something of the badness rubbed off on us. All of us felt unclean. The details of the trial sickened me: my imagination ran too freely. But there is no disguising the fact that a part of me was titillated: I wanted to know all the details, not solely because it was my job to do so, but because there was an element in them of repulsive stimulation.<sup>1</sup>

The British writer Pamela Hansford Johnson, commenting here shortly after the Moors murders trial in a 1966 edition of *LIFE* magazine, conveyed to her readers the sense of both fear and fascination which had gripped her and others following the case. This chapter documents media representations of the events and individuals involved in the Moors case, and also explores wider linguistic themes in the context of sex and crime in 1960s Britain. The aim is to make a contribution to the wider story of changing representations of 'child sexual abuse' – even if it was not known as such – over the longer postwar period. I will describe the events of 1965 and 1966 in detail. The basic elements spoke to an engrossed British public of severe transgression – both spiritual and physical. The nature of the crimes also makes the case particularly relevant to a discussion of representations of child sexual crime in Britain. Between July 1963 and October 1965, Myra Hindley and Ian Brady killed five children between the ages of 10 and 17, with four of them sexually assaulted and then buried on Saddleworth Moor in the South Pennines.<sup>2</sup> The legacy of the Moors

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<sup>1</sup> Pamela Hansford Johnson, 'Who's To Blame When a Murderer Strikes?', *LIFE*, 12 August 1966, 68.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of the trial in April-May 1966, only three of the murders – those of Lesley Ann Downey, 10, John Kilbride, 12, and Edward Evans, 17, were known. Further disclosure came when Brady supposedly confessed to two further murders, those of Pauline Reade, 16, and Keith Bennett, 12, in 1986. Bennett's body, as of 2018, is yet to be found. Myra Hindley died in 2002, and Ian Brady in 2017.

murders is well established in British culture, and feelings of fear, detestation and outrage have been in evidence variously since 1966. Specific criticism was reserved for Hindley, which marked a wider point about the nature of gender and sexual crime in Britain, and public responses to females involved in the abuse of children. In 1972, for instance, *The Times* noted the ‘roused passions quite out of proportion to the episode itself’ when Hindley was allowed out by the governor of her prison, Holloway, for a walk in a park. The ‘strong public feeling’ was due to both the chance of escape and the sense that a small freedom was being granted to such an ‘evil’ criminal.<sup>3</sup> Alongside news stories often sits an infamous photograph of Hindley, described by Helen Birch as having become ‘synonymous with feminine evil ... at once atavistic – drawing its power from potent symbols of wicked women from the Medusa to seventeenth-century witches – and portentous – what kind of violent acts might women be capable of?’ This image, claims Birch, inspires terror and fascination.<sup>4</sup>

I argue here that in the historical moment of the mid-1960s, representations of child sexual crime were heavily coloured by these types of imagery and metonyms. One possible response to these allusive representations is that they reveal the direct *absence* of the languages of ‘paedophilia’ and ‘child sexual abuse’. This absence appears to signal an inability – whether wilful or not – to directly engage with the sexual nature of the crimes. But such a conclusion reads these representations anachronistically, expecting contemporary language and terms to be present in the sources. I find instead that there were indeed ways of speaking about adult sexual abuse of children that prefigured but also differ from current-day frameworks set out in the preceding chapter. Whilst this study does not seek to quantify with certainty what people *knew*, my coverage of various press publications documents the ways in which in courtrooms and newspapers in particular, the essential nature of Brady and Hindley’s crimes was not directly approached. Instead language invoked, for example, demonic imagery in order to portray Brady and Hindley as inhuman and unknowable. It also represented the scene of the crimes – the moors – as a mystical hinterland, and drew on and exploited contemporary cultural and

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Public Opinion And Prison Treatment’, *The Times*, 15 September 1972, sec. Editorials/Leaders.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Birch, ‘If Looks Could Kill: Myra Hindley and the Iconography of Evil’, in *Moving Targets: Women, Murder, and Representation*, ed. Helen Birch (University of California Press, 1994), 32.

social fears, in particular homosexuality. Such ways of speaking came to 'stand in' for the apparently unsayable nature of crimes involving children in general, and the details of the Moors murders in particular.

## **Framework and Sources**

Here I set out the structure of the chapter and look at the secondary literature on the murders, questioning why the case has rarely been thought of as a worthwhile area for analytical or academic research, and suggesting where this case study intervenes. The chapter proceeds with a contextual look at 1960s Britain through the lens of media culture and sexual mores. Then I give an overview of the events surrounding the Moors murders and trial in 1965 and 1966, replaying the manner in which the public received the news. This approach introduces the ways in which members of the media 'talked around' the issues of 'child sexual abuse' and child murder. Audiences, in turn, rendered their own knowledge of the case in a fragmentary fashion. In documenting this process, I contribute a slightly different story to extant accounts. The second half of the chapter more closely scrutinises the language used – and, indeed, not used – by newspapers and periodicals in 1965 and 1966 in reporting on the trial, and in portraits of Brady and Hindley. After challenging notions of silence and lack of language, I spotlight press and courtroom tropes of distance, psychologisation, and preoccupations with the topography and spaces of the Moors murders. The media drew on the latter to target a British public interested in crime stories both real and fictional. Other cases involving sexual abuse and or murder of children reveal press language that suggest the Moors murders were not quite a unique representational episode. The case study ends with an epilogue that explores the reaction to Ian Brady's death in 2017, and highlights the ways in which media representations of abuse and abusers have both endured and evolved.

The bulk of the primary evidence for this study consists of newspaper reportage between 1965 and 1966. According to media theorists Keith Soothill and Sylvia Walby, newspaper reports are put together in four ways: they can be taken from court proceedings, and such reports are 'structured by the



courtroom discourse'; they can be forged from 'wider journalistic efforts' such as contacts within the police or interviewing people involved in some way; they may report on parliamentary proceedings discussing changes in the law, demonstrating closeness between newspapers and the judiciary; lastly, they may be based on research by academics and activists.<sup>5</sup> The first two models are particularly relevant in any assessment of the Moors murders. The newspapers I have chosen fall into three categories: national broadsheets (*The Guardian, The Observer, The Times, The Telegraph*), national tabloids (*Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, The Sun, News of the World*) and local or regional (*Gorton & Openshaw Reporter, Lancashire Evening Post, Manchester Evening News*). I have also looked at periodical publications (*The Spectator, LIFE*). Intended demographics and circulations varied considerably, and I therefore foreground parts of my analysis with considerations of reporting styles and press agendas. Those who watched television and read newspapers were not a homogenous mass with singular tastes and ideas about discretion. It is not one of the aims of this thesis to quantify public opinion from media representations. As historian Nick Thomas puts it, 'publication of a book does not necessarily mean even those who read it are influenced by it ... and it does not automatically cause widespread, predictable or even easily discernible change in behaviour or attitudes'.<sup>6</sup> But such representations – by virtue of *being* representations – do convey meaning in their own right.

In selecting a diverse newspaper source base, I have been able to chart the ways in which various media outlets created different representations of the same story. Local newspapers such as the *Manchester Evening News* (circulation of c.250,000 in 1945) and *Lancashire Evening Post* (c.88,000 in 1945) had a more emotional and immediate institutional involvement in the case, reflected in the sober and thorough nature of the trial reporting.<sup>7</sup> In the former, in particular, court proceedings were recounted almost verbatim.<sup>8</sup> The Fleet Street-based nationals gave off more of a sense of shocked observation, using

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<sup>5</sup> Keith Soothill and Sylvia Walby, *Sex Crime in the News* (London: Routledge, 1991), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Thomas, "'To-Night's Big Talking Point Is Still THAT BOOK': Popular Responses to the Lady Chatterley Trial", *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 4 (2013): 630.

<sup>7</sup> Circulation data from Colin Seymour-Ure, *The British Press and Broadcasting Since 1945* (Wiley, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> See *Manchester Evening News*, April-May 1966.

striking language that reached for audience's emotions. The *News of the World*, for example, with a reputation for sensationalism and with circulation figures to maintain, played up the eeriness of the moors' topography and Brady's supposedly demonic characteristics. Its visceral approach was designed to be easily accessible. Whilst that title's visual style and language were particularly striking, other nationals I looked at – including *The Guardian*, *Daily Mail* and *The Times* – seemed to retain a veneer of semantic 'objectivity', something particularly important for publications that cared for their reputation as newspapers of record. Of course, whilst the output of some broadsheets appeared relatively sedate, the behaviour and information-gathering methods of their journalists were not necessarily different from that of the tabloids.<sup>9</sup> This was reflected in a motion by Labour backbenchers, with Liberal support, for general restrictions on 'the reporting of magistrates' court proceedings in sensational murder cases', which they considered excessive whichever paper the journalists were from.<sup>10</sup>

When comparing the *News of the World* to, say, the *Lancashire Evening Post*, I became conscious of the sensitivity of the community-orientated, local newspaper as set against the commercially minded national. Soothill and Walby, writing about rape and its portrayal in the media, have commented on the discord between the national and the regional: 'the local press is dealing much more closely with the everyday reality of rape, while the popular dailies coalesce the fantasy of the video nasty with real life'.<sup>11</sup> I found this to be particularly true of the tabloids, which were bombastic both in literary style and in journalistic behaviour. This style was not particular to coverage of the Moors murders: tabloids during this period are littered with salacious stories and advertising and an air of prurience. The *News of the World's* circulation of c.6.125 million in 1965 was the highest of any English-language newspaper in the world, and thus had enormous public reach.<sup>12</sup> The paper became directly

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<sup>9</sup> For example, journalists from all newspapers made up some of the groups on Saddleworth Moor during the initial searches for bodies in October 1965.

<sup>10</sup> 'M.P.s Call for Ban on Court Reports', *The Times*, 17 December 1965, sec. News.

<sup>11</sup> Soothill and Walby, *Sex Crime in the News*, 146.

<sup>12</sup> Circulation data from Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, *United Newspapers PLC and Fleet Holdings PLC: A Report on the Proposed Transfer of Fleet Holdings PLC to United Newspapers PLC* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1985), 5-16.

embroiled in the trial itself with an exposition of ‘chequebook journalism’ when it emerged that the editor Stafford Somerfield had offered David Smith £1,000 for an account of his experiences with Brady and Hindley.<sup>13</sup> Politicians and regulators viewed this as an insensitive and crass manoeuvre. It also spoke volumes about the motivational contrasts between the largely circulation-focused national tabloids and the sober regional presses, which seemed to carry a sense of local responsibility.

This case study adds to a relatively slight catalogue of analytical work – historical or otherwise – that has focused on the Moors murders. In the accounts that do exist, there has been limited intersection of the topic with a wider consideration of child sexual abuse. Adrian Bingham has produced the most significant recent historical approach to the case in his account of the *News of the World’s* financial inducement to David Smith.<sup>14</sup> My work crosses over with Bingham’s in that it examines similar events (the Moors trial) and press sources (particularly the *News of the World*), and uses the representations of actors involved to build a historical narrative. However, our aims are different. Bingham weaves a story about the workings and regulation of the press in the mid-1960s, drawing conclusions about press culture and attitudes generally and the *News of the World* specifically.<sup>15</sup> My case study is primarily concerned with language, and how ways of speaking during the Moors trial relate to the wider story of narratives on ‘child sexual abuse’. Whilst I am also interested in the productive means of the media, the press is a vehicle with which to move forward my representational project, rather than being the kernel of the thesis.

Other work has tended to fall not under the arches of history, but rather crime or media studies. Helen Birch, alongside a useful account of the murders and an introduction to several of the themes inherent in their representation, looks at the way in which Hindley has been portrayed by the press as a symbol

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<sup>13</sup> See for a thorough recent discussion of this: Adrian Bingham, “‘Gross Interference with the Course of Justice’: The News of the World and the Moors Murder Trial”, in *The News of the World and the British Press, 1843–2011*, ed. Laurel Brake, Chandrika Kaul, and Mark W. Turner, Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 229–43.

<sup>14</sup> Bingham.

<sup>15</sup> Bingham has also produced a significant body of work on the press and child sexual abuse in other historical contexts.

of 'feminine evil'.<sup>16</sup> More recently, Lisa Downing has also discussed Hindley's gendered portrayal as 'abnormal' and 'excessively sexual' in an argument that challenges the social and cultural 'othering' of murderers.<sup>17</sup> Whilst my case study explores similar threads, it differs in considering the relevance of the Moors episode in relation to its representations of child sexual abuse, rather than feminine iconography. Criminologist Yvonne Jewkes looks at depictions of Myra Hindley in the context of a study on misogyny in the media, though more through the lens of 1970s press coverage than immediate responses in 1965 and 1966.<sup>18</sup> Soothill and Walby's study on sex crime and the media, which undertakes a case study of later Moors murders press coverage in 1985, and a chapter by historian Mathew Thomson which briefly touches on the murders in the context of stranger danger and 'paedophilia', are other analytical studies on the topic.<sup>19</sup> It is hard to pinpoint exactly why the topic has been relatively neglected in academic work, but one speculation is that scholars have not sought to draw too many conclusions from a series of events that seemed unique and, in their uniqueness, apparently lacking in wider meaning. With Ian Brady's death in 2017 occurring amidst increasing public concern about child sexual abuse and exploitation, the broader relevance of the case may yet become more apparent.

Elsewhere, there is a large canon of popular literature on the Moors murders that has tended towards fact assimilation and detailed accounts of the crimes. These might fall under the categories of investigative journalism or 'true crime'.<sup>20</sup> The titles of some of these works suggest the sensational intentions of

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<sup>16</sup> Birch, 'If Looks Could Kill: Myra Hindley and the Iconography of Evil', 32.

<sup>17</sup> Lisa Downing, *The Subject of Murder: Gender, Exceptionality, and the Modern Killer* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 123.

<sup>18</sup> Yvonne Jewkes, *Media and Crime*, Key Approaches to Criminology (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 107-137.

<sup>19</sup> Keith Soothill and Sylvia Walby, *Sex Crime in the News* (London: Routledge, 1991); Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (OUP Oxford, 2013), 87-91.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, John Deane Potter, *The Monsters of the Moors* (London: Elek, 1966); Pamela Hansford Johnson, *On Iniquity: Some Personal Reflections Arising Out of the Moors Murder Trial* (Scribner, 1967); Fred Harrison, *Brady and Hindley: Genesis of the Moors Murders* (London: Grafton Books, 1987); Peter Topping and Jean Ritchie, *Topping: The Autobiography of the Police Chief in the Moors Murder Case* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1989); Emlyn Williams, *Beyond Belief: A Chronicle of Murder and Its Detection* (Pan Books, 1992); Jonathan Goodman, *Moors Murders: The Trial of Myra Hindley and Ian Brady* (Parragon Book Service Limited, 1994); David Smith and Carol Ann Lee, *Witness: The Story of David Smith, Chief Prosecution Witness in the*

the authors or publishers, as well as attempts to position Brady and Hindley as something 'other' or inhuman: *Monsters of the Moors* (1966), *On Iniquity* (1967), *Beyond Belief* (1992), *Face to Face with Evil* (2011). At work in some of these pieces is something of a contradiction; the authors profess to offer the 'true story' of the case, yet much of the prose, in addition to the titles themselves, is shot through with a sensationalism that damages these intentions. Such works tend to position the crimes as being beyond public comprehension. These authorial responses condemn the perpetrators and attempt to set out as plainly as possible the 'facts'.<sup>21</sup> There are exceptions to this, with some insightful volumes by individuals involved either in the original case, or with Brady or Hindley following their convictions. Forensic psychologist Chris Cowley, for example, published an account of his six years of visits to Brady in prison (2011), although the sensational title of the work, referencing 'evil', does not match up with the more considered prose inside.<sup>22</sup> Writers such as Val McDermid (2010) and Tommy Rhatigan (2017) have provided alternative perspectives on the case through a novel and a fictionalised memoir respectively.<sup>23</sup> Carol Ann Lee's 2011 book on Myra Hindley quotes the Detective Chief Superintendent Ian Fairley in saying that 'there's never been a single book on this case that's got the facts right'. Lee notes this as one of the primary motivations for writing her book: 'the facts have never been properly told'.<sup>24</sup> It is not within the remit of this project to address this apparent gap, not least because Lee and many others have attempted to do so already. More than this, any attempt to correct perceived past errors by laying out all of the 'facts' elides the way that ignorance of the facts, and indirect ways of speaking, were themselves crucial parts of the narrative. It is this that I focus on here. I intend

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*Moors Murders Case* (London: Random House, 2011); Carol Ann Lee, *One of Your Own: The Life and Death of Myra Hindley* (London: Random House, 2011); Chris Cowley, *Face to Face with Evil: Conversations with Ian Brady* (London: John Blake Publishing, 2011); Carol Ann Lee and David Smith, *Evil Relations (Formerly Published as Witness): The Man Who Bore Witness Against the Moors Murderers* (London: Random House, 2012); Duncan Staff, *The Lost Boy* (London: Bantam Books, 2012); Erica Gregory, *The Secret Key to the Moors Murders* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2013); Alan Keightley, *Ian Brady: The Untold Story of the Moors Murders* (London: Pavilion Books, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the full transcript of the trial in Goodman, *Moors Murders*.

<sup>22</sup> Cowley, *Face to Face with Evil*.

<sup>23</sup> Val McDermid, *A Place of Execution* (London: HarperCollins, 2010); Tommy Rhattigan, *1963: A Slice of Bread and Jam* (London: Mirror Books, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Lee, *One of Your Own*, 1.

for this chapter to make an intervention by locating the Moors murders in a historical, representational framework relating to child sexual abuse.

### **Media, Sex and the Sixties**

The mid-sixties were an environment in which British press groups afforded the Moors murders copious coverage, yet were seemingly unable to delve into the exact nature and details of the crimes involved. Justin Bengry has written about the importance of materialist and capitalist motivations to newspaper coverage when discussing homosexuality and the press. He points out the 1950s as the period in which press organisations began to intensify their commentaries on homosexuality and the apparent dangers of queer ‘degenerates’ who roamed the country’s urban streets. For newspapers, there were big financial rewards in offering the public just the right amount of ‘scandal and titillation’.<sup>25</sup> Alison Oram states in her study of portrayals of lesbianism in the British press in the same decade that whilst newspapers were giving more sexual information than previously, they did so with

the commercial aim of entertaining its readers while remaining sufficiently respectable. Sexual content ... was delivered in a limited format; suspended between the registers of titillation and moral condemnation, with much material censored, omitted or described in euphemistic language.<sup>26</sup>

This chimes with my findings of the narratives employed to report on the Moors murders in 1965 and 1966: a sense that whilst there was an appetite for shocking, salacious tales, there were limited structural and linguistic mechanisms for truly addressing and discussing them.

People may have *known*, but they did not necessarily *say* – at least not publicly. A 1969 play by John Hopkins, about a troubled police officer who had

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<sup>25</sup> Justin Bengry, ‘Queer Profits: Homosexual Scandal and the Origins of Legal Reform in Britain’, in *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, ed. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 168.

<sup>26</sup> Alison Oram, “Love ‘Off the Rails’ or ‘Over the Teacups’? Lesbian Desire and Female Sexualities in the 1950s British Popular Press,” in *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, ed. Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43.

beaten to death a child molester, did suggest that sexual offences were discussed more openly in the living room than in the newspapers.<sup>27</sup> And in the wake of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial of 1960, taxi driver Lew Grant, in an interview to the *Daily Herald*, 'succinctly verbalized the attitudes of many thousands': '[I] wanted to see what the fuss was all about. Always been interested in sex, you know.'<sup>28</sup> Oram and Thomas show a Britain revealing signs of two versions of itself: the austere Britain which played up conservative values and the nuclear family, and the permissive society which wanted to know more about sex and crime, and in which censorship was beginning to slip.<sup>29</sup> Thomas notes that that book's trial and eventual success 'have come to exemplify a clash of worlds, one Victorian, repressed, deferential, restricted by class assumptions and hopelessly out of touch, the other progressive, open, liberated and, above all, permissive'.<sup>30</sup> The Profumo Affair of 1963 also inhabited a conflicted space of 'moral indignation' and a 'long-established interest in sexual matters'.<sup>31</sup> Such neat encapsulations do not necessarily reflect the more complicated nature of permissiveness in 1960s Britain, particularly when adding the consideration of sexual matters related to the child.<sup>32</sup> Historians have pointed out that the sexualisation of children in national media and advertising was well underway by the time of the Moors murders.<sup>33</sup> A *News of the World* feature in May 1966, appearing on the same day the Moors murder trial verdicts were reported, spoke of Britain's modern girl in the following terms: 'shameless, short-skirted, interested in nothing but pop-stars, pep-pills and sex; rude, selfish and sloppy'.<sup>34</sup> Implicit in such descriptions is a sense that

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<sup>27</sup> John Hopkins, *This Story of Yours* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), see Act I. The play was revived for a small run at the White Bear Theatre in London in January 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas, "'To-Night's Big Talking Point Is Still THAT BOOK'", 619.

<sup>29</sup> See for discussions about the British sixties Marcus Collins, ed., *The Permissive Society and Its Enemies: Sixties British Culture* (London: Rivers Oram, 2007); Jenny Diski, *The Sixties* (London: Profile Books, 2010), 136; Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), Introduction.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, "'To-Night's Big Talking Point Is Still THAT BOOK'", 619.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Farmer, 'The Profumo Affair in Popular Culture: The Keeler Affair (1963) and "the Commercial Exploitation of a Public Scandal"', *Contemporary British History* 31, no. 3 (3 July 2017): 456.

<sup>32</sup> See for example Matt Cook, 'Sexual Revolution(s) in Britain', in *Sexual Revolutions*, ed. Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 122.

<sup>33</sup> See for example Daniel Thomas Cook, *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 25.

<sup>34</sup> 'The Modern Girl and Sex', *News of the World*, 8 May 1966.

young people – especially when teenaged and female – were symbols of the supposed decline of British morals in the 1960s.

Pamela Hansford Johnson, so horrified by Brady and Hindley's actions, certainly felt that the Moors murders were evidence of moral disintegration within Britain, and that such incidents would become commonplace – one of the costs of a 'permissive society'.<sup>35</sup> 1950s debates on censorship had culminated in an update to the Obscene Publications Act (1959), which proscribed literature that would 'deprave and corrupt'.<sup>36</sup> Johnson felt, with reference to the acquittal of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* publishers, that British 'society' had 'abolished or greatly lessened the restraints of censorship and other legal inhibitions on what might be seen or read'.<sup>37</sup> Despite this, there were still seemingly restricted elements to the press coverage of the Moors murders. In one way, this reflected the similarly restricted courtroom language that the press were relaying. Yet there was a reactionary and reluctant element within a press corps that had itself been a vociferous proponent of censorship.<sup>38</sup> The Act's wording was also vague, giving little clarity as to what exactly was or was not considered 'depraved and corrupt', and the press continued to work around such ambiguity by using 'strategies for producing publicly acceptable stories and features about sex'.<sup>39</sup> In this way, reporting on the Moors murders was often, given the context of the 1959 Act, aptly ambiguous.

Mid-sixties press language reveals limited and inexact engagement with the crimes themselves. Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle have spotlighted the ways that 'court reporting ... enabled newspapers to describe sexual offences, even if some of the details were shrouded by euphemism'.<sup>40</sup> Jenny Diski, writing about the Profumo Affair, has noted too that much like the Moors murders reporting, the 'scandal offered scope for reporting all or most of the prohibited

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<sup>35</sup> Johnson, *On Iniquity*.

<sup>36</sup> 'Obscene Publications Act 1959' (1959), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/7-8/66/contents>.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years: Britain in the Sixties* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2003), 388.

<sup>38</sup> Lisa Z. Sigel, 'Censorship in Inter-War Britain: Obscenity, Spectacle, and the Workings of the Liberal State', *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (2011): 62.

<sup>39</sup> Ruth Costigan and Richard Stone, *Civil Liberties & Human Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 349; Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle, 'Scandals and Silences: The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse' (History & Policy, 4 August 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/scandals-and-silences-the-british-press-and-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>40</sup> Bingham and Settle, 'Scandals and Silences'.



subjects ... yet very few of the grubby details were revealed'.<sup>41</sup> Historians such as Dominic Sandbrook have observed the way in which the Moors trial made publicly visible the supposed link between moral permissiveness and violent crime. The backdrop to this was a general rise in recorded violent crimes against the person, from around 6,000 in 1955 to around 21,000 in 1969.<sup>42</sup> The figures suggest a rise in actual crime, attributed by commentators to 'a new celebration of individualism ... and hedonism' in the 1960s.<sup>43</sup> However, criminologists have suggested that such increases were also down to better communication and reporting, and more efficient policing.<sup>44</sup> Commentators such as Levin and Johnson perhaps underplayed the long tradition of British interest in grisly crimes. As Judith Walkowitz has reflected, many tropes from the Jack the Ripper narrative, to take one example, were recycled at the time of the Yorkshire Ripper murders in the 1970s.<sup>45</sup> In her compilation of crime articles from the *News of the World*, Jean Ritchie has said, when comparing Victorian and modern reporting styles, that 'it is the similarities, and not the differences, between the paper then and the paper now which stand out. Crime has not changed a great deal, it seems.'<sup>46</sup> Whilst that may be an oversimplification, interest in 'great' crimes – or representations of them – was certainly not a new phenomenon in the 1960s.

Other infamous crime narratives of the era included the Great Train Robbery of 1963, the activities of the criminal Kray brothers, and the Shepherd's Bush police murders of August 1966.<sup>47</sup> The latter, coming soon after the Moors murders trial, again led to vociferous calls from sections of the public for the reinstatement of the death penalty, which had been revoked in 1965. Sir

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<sup>41</sup> Jenny Diski, 'Rumour Is Utterly Unfounded', *London Review of Books*, 8 October 2009, 38.

<sup>42</sup> Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Little, Brown, 2006), 539.

<sup>43</sup> Clive Emsley, *The English and Violence Since 1750* (London: A&C Black, 2007), 170.

<sup>44</sup> See for instance Frank E. Hagan, *Introduction to Criminology: Theories, Methods, and Criminal Behavior* (London: SAGE, 2011), 30; Clive R. Hollin, *Psychology and Crime: An Introduction to Criminological Psychology* (London: Routledge, 2013), 32–37.

<sup>45</sup> See Judith R. Walkowitz, 'Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence', *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 3 (1 October 1982): 543–74; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), see epilogue 'The Yorkshire Ripper'.

<sup>46</sup> Jean Ritchie, *150 Years of True Crime Stories from the 'News of the World'* (London: Michael O'Mara, 1993), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, 539.

John Hobson, Conservative MP, told *The Times* that 'the country needs no persuading that the death penalty ought to have been retained and should now be restored at least for murder by shooting and for murder of a policeman or of a prison warder or of anyone assisting them.'<sup>48</sup> For all that there may have been a heightened interest in racy, prurient topics and events, conservatism remained at the root of much of British life. David Frost and Antony Jay conducted a contemporary study of 1960s Britain and found that despite the backdrop of supposed permissiveness, 'the English are as reserved as ever they were, and anyone who doubts it is perfectly welcome to try to strike up a conversation with a stranger in a train, but he is advised to take a book on his journey, too'.<sup>49</sup> Overall, an observation of the nature of sex and crime in 1960s Britain leaves a dichotomous view. On the one hand, we see the spectacle of the extreme, lucidly summed up by Arthur Marwick:

The most rebellious actions, the most obscure theories, the wildest cultural extremism, the very 'underground' itself: all operated as publicly as possible, and ... attracted the maximum publicity. Thus one extreme gesture, one breaking of all existing taboos, simply accelerated into the next. Each spectacle had to be more extreme than the previous one.<sup>50</sup>

In spite of these new extremities, the media at root appeared reticent about fully addressing the issues in which it appeared so interested. Alison Oram notes that the *News of the World* 'trod a fine line between salaciousness and decency'.<sup>51</sup> This quite reasonably defines the backdrop upon which British media outlets addressed the nature of the Moors crimes, and constructed narratives around this.

Each newspaper title has its own agenda and habits. Media historian S.J. Taylor has asserted that 'tabloid journalism is the direct application of

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<sup>48</sup> 'Protection for the Police Force', *The Times*, 16 August 1966.

<sup>49</sup> Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, 189.

<sup>50</sup> Arthur Marwick, 'Introduction', in *Windows on the Sixties: Exploring Key Texts of Media and Culture*, ed. Anthony Aldgate, James Chapman, and Arthur Marwick (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), xviii.

<sup>51</sup> Oram, 'Love "Off the Rails" or "Over the Teacups"? Lesbian Desire and Female Sexualities in the 1950s British Popular Press', 43.

capitalism to events and ideas. Profit, not ethics, is the prevailing motivation'.<sup>52</sup> The memoirs of Stafford Somerfield, editor of the *News of the World* from 1960 until 1970 (when he was sacked in a three-minute salvo by Rupert Murdoch), suggest that he felt similarly. In the introduction to this project I noted the difficulties in proving press motivation from their output (newspapers) alone, but diaries and memoirs can potentially take us closer. As the editor of the most widely circulated English-language newspaper at the time of the Moors murders, Somerfield was in a rare position from which to set the tone of the response to the crimes. As for his general outlook, he wrote unashamedly of his newspaper's profit motive: 'the first thing to get clear is that a newspaper is a business. Some criticise the profit motive of the popular press. But a newspaper without financial strength is far more vulnerable to undesirable influences'.<sup>53</sup> Somerfield was clear about the way the business would be run from his first day as editor. He gathered his staff together and asked them: 'what the hell are we going to do about the circulation? It's going down the drain. It's still the largest, but won't continue so if we go on like this. We want a series of articles that will make their hair curl'.<sup>54</sup> The *News of the World* faced criticism throughout Somerfield's decade as editor for its apparent prurience and exploitation of sexual matters. Somerfield recalls an angry Bernard Levin attacking his morals (or lack thereof) in a live television debate: 'I enjoyed [Levin's] performance, although I thought he overplayed it'.<sup>55</sup> Somerfield's predecessor Reginald Cudlipp, channelling Samuel Johnson, felt that 'the person who has no interest in the *News of the World* has no interest in life'.<sup>56</sup> The editors' declarations suggest that the *News of the World* set out to make their paper as eye-catching as possible, explaining to some degree why cases such as the Moors murders were reported with such dramatic language.

Somerfield declared himself an unabashed opponent of censorship, finding it to be a 'great evil', and was often embroiled in disputes with the Press

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<sup>52</sup> S.J. Taylor, *Shock! Horror! The Tabloids in Action* (London: Black Swan, 1992), 409.

<sup>53</sup> Stafford Somerfield, *Banner Headlines* (Shoreham by Sea: Scan Books, 1979), 109.

<sup>54</sup> Somerfield, 111.

<sup>55</sup> Somerfield, 111.

<sup>56</sup> Cyril Bainbridge and Roy Stockdill, *The News of the World Story: 150 Years of the World's Bestselling Newspaper* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), 1.

Council over the *News of the World's* methods.<sup>57</sup> An issue arose during the Moors trial proceedings regarding the paper's payment to David Smith, which was dependent on Brady and Hindley's convictions. Smith, as the chief witness, had a vested financial interest in seeing Brady and Hindley convicted, though the judge ultimately overlooked this whilst presiding over the eventual outcome. He also reserved a degree of sympathy for Smith, who faced a 'temptation to which he should never have been exposed for a moment'.<sup>58</sup> The *News of the World* escaped without serious punishment, although the incident led to governmental interest and ended with the Press Council producing its first 'Declaration of Principle'.<sup>59</sup> Such behaviour was encapsulated in Somerfield's later and somewhat contradictory assessment that the newspaper was 'more concerned with the victims than the criminals; we believed in capital punishment and the lash for those who raped, for those who smashed old and crippled people over the head'.<sup>60</sup>

In this way Somerfield seemed to be positioning his newspaper and its journalists within a lineage of crusading moralists – the 'knights in shining armour' such as W.T. Stead who took social matters into their own hands when government or other bodies were failing the public. Somerfield attached weight to 'protecting' his audiences:

I concerned myself very much about the possible effect that details of a crime – that is, the exact method – would have on the young and weak-minded. We kept these details to a minimum ... While we gave the facts, those subjects dealing with brutality and violence were treated with great care. It was important to keep in mind the possible effect on our vast audience.<sup>61</sup>

There was, if we take Somerfield at face value, a distinct profit motive, and an apparent disdain for censorship. But ultimately he desired to keep 'details' – the 'exact method' of great crimes – limited, as I will demonstrate here. It is a large jump to claim that all editors and the media at large were deliberately covering

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<sup>57</sup> Bainbridge and Stockdill, 117.

<sup>58</sup> Jack Miller and Jack Nott, 'Curtain Falls on Moor Murder Drama', *News of the World*, 8 May 1966.

<sup>59</sup> Goodman, *Moors Murders*, 30; Bingham, "Gross Interference with the Course of Justice", 230.

<sup>60</sup> Somerfield, *Banner Headlines*, 150.

<sup>61</sup> Somerfield, 151.

up the more disturbing facts about Brady and Hindley's crimes, not least because their source material, the courtroom debate, itself revealed limited sexual detail. However, Somerfield's account suggests that there was little readiness amongst press proprietors to discuss sexual crimes against children.

## **The Events**

Shortly after the death of seventeen-year-old Edward Evans on the evening of 6 October 1965, the Moors murders became public knowledge. David Smith, Myra Hindley's brother-in-law (also seventeen) who had been present at the murder and was being groomed as a criminal by Brady, contacted police the following morning. The ensuing arrests and investigations marked an end to Brady and Hindley's crimes. Yet it also meant the beginning of public engagement with the case, with press attention focused on the police's efforts and recovery of the details of the murders. This reflects how the case was assembled and represented inversely, or even historically. Detailed biographical accounts of the perpetrators – both in newspapers and, later, true crime volumes – were left until the end of the trial in 1966, and the construction of a fully detailed picture of events is still ongoing.<sup>62</sup> Sixteen-year-old Pauline Reade was the first to be murdered in July 1963, though Brady and Hindley confessed to her murder only in 1986. Reade's remains were the most recent to be discovered, in 1987. This emphasises the fragmentary way in which the story was put together between the discovery of Evans' body and the trial. At no stage during this window did the public know the full extent of Brady and Hindley's crimes. I therefore interject in places to distinguish between what was known during the period October 1965–May 1966 and how that was represented, and what information came to light later on. This distinction brings the case study closer to the actual language used in media reporting at the time, helping to ward off anachronism.

On 9 October 1965 it was stated in the press that a man, identified as stock clerk Ian Brady, had been remanded and 'charged with the murder of Edward Evans, aged 17, at a house in Wardle Brook Avenue, Battersley, Hyde. Superintendent R. Talbot said police went to the house on Thursday and found

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<sup>62</sup> Keith Bennett's body is yet to be found as of 2018.

the body in the back bedroom.’<sup>63</sup> The details of the murder were not fully reported until December, when the case for the prosecution was heard in court along with chief witness Smith’s statement, and then in more detail still in the court case of April-May 1966. These later accounts paint a fuller picture: Brady had been dropped off by Hindley at Manchester Central Station to search for a victim to pick up and take back to Hindley’s grandmother’s house, where both of the perpetrators lived and carried out many of their crimes. The court reporting from April seems to suggest that Brady had known Evans previously: ‘Brady described how he met Evans whom he said he knew as a homosexual, at Central Station, Manchester’.<sup>64</sup> David Smith’s memoirs note that Brady would often visit the station or gay bars in Manchester such as the Rembrandt or the Union and watch the ‘maggots’: ‘They dress the same, looking for the rush, the high, the heat, eye contact, running their hands through their hair, posing, waiting, giving the smile’. The fact that Brady had chosen the station as a location suggested to Smith that he was specifically looking for a homosexual victim that evening.<sup>65</sup>

Brady enticed Evans back to the house in Wardle Brook Avenue with the offer of alcohol. When they arrived there, Brady and Evans began to drink whilst Hindley went to collect David Smith from the house he shared with his wife, Maureen (Hindley’s sister). When they arrived back at the house, according to Smith’s account, Brady was hacking at Evans’ head in the lounge with a hatchet, whilst Hindley’s grandmother slept upstairs.<sup>66</sup> Brady’s account in court was different. He claimed that Smith had been complicit in the murder due to his contempt for homosexuals, and had kicked and hit Evans with a stick.<sup>67</sup> Brady admitted: ‘I don’t know how many times I hit him. The axe did not seem to have any effect’; ‘I just kept hitting him until he shut up’.<sup>68</sup> Despite this attack, Evans remained alive, making a ‘gurgling’ noise. Smith stated in December 1965 that Brady ‘got a cord like a plastic electric flex and placed in [sic] round Evans’s neck and pulled it and kept on pulling it until the gurgling stopped’. He also

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<sup>63</sup> ‘Man Remanded on Murder Charge’, *The Guardian*, 9 October 1965.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Brady Describes Hitting Youth With Axe’, *The Times*, 30 April 1966.

<sup>65</sup> Smith and Lee, *Witness (Later Issued as Evil Relations)*, 54.

<sup>66</sup> Colin Wilson, ‘Introduction: The Moors Murders’, in *The Gates of Janus: Serial Killing and Its Analysis*, by Ian Brady (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001), 16.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Brady Describes Hitting Youth With Axe’.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Moors Case: Brady Tells of the Night Evans Died’, *Daily Mail*, 30 April 1966; ‘Brady Describes Hitting Youth With Axe’.

claimed that Brady, whilst strangling Evans, repeatedly swore at and referred to the victim as 'you dirty bastard'.<sup>69</sup> After Evans had stopped breathing, Smith claimed, Brady said that it had been the 'messiest one yet. Normally one blow is enough'.<sup>70</sup> Brady's account in April 1966 was different, saying that Smith turned Evans on his back and put a magazine under his head until the gurgling stopped and Evans died.<sup>71</sup> Smith, claiming to have been feeling shock and fear, admitted assisting with the process of cleaning up, and was violently sick after arriving home at 3.30am. He told his wife Maureen what he had witnessed, and – armed with a screwdriver and carving knife – they called the police from a telephone kiosk at 6am that morning.<sup>72</sup>

Once the story was out, the public's attention held firm. The case of Evans was marked by differences to the murders of the other victims. Evans was the only one of the five (though the trial in 1966 investigated only the three murders of Evans, John Kilbride and Lesley Ann Downey) who was not sexually assaulted. He was the only one whose body was not buried on the moors, though Brady and Hindley had planned to do so until Smith reported the murder. He was also the eldest of the victims, and perhaps the only one who would not be described as a 'child', with news reporting from the *Daily Mail* attempting to delineate the victims as 'a 17-year-old boy and two children'.<sup>73</sup> The details given about his life by the press suggested that he had agency and identity as a young homosexual man. In the days following the discovery of Evans' body, and with the help of Smith's witness accounts, the police set about establishing the facts of the other murders. Hindley was arrested four days after Brady, on 11 October, and initially charged as an accessory to Evans' murder. Smith had been privy to Brady and Hindley's criminal plans and stories as their protégé. He himself had written things in his diary such as 'rape is not a crime, it is a state of mind. God is a disease ... murder is a hobby and a supreme pleasure'.<sup>74</sup> He knew to direct the police to Saddleworth Moor, where the pair had boasted to him of burying bodies. On Thursday 14 October *The Guardian*

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<sup>69</sup> Goodman, *Moors Murders*, 21.

<sup>70</sup> 'Prosecution Tells of How a Youth of 17 Died', *The Times*, 8 December 1965.

<sup>71</sup> 'Brady Describes Hitting Youth With Axe'.

<sup>72</sup> 'Prosecution Tells of How a Youth of 17 Died'.

<sup>73</sup> 'Moors Case: Brady Tells of the Night Evans Died'.

<sup>74</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 14.

reported the police's check for 'possible murder victims', with files of eight people who had gone missing in the previous three or four years brought up. Three of these – Downey, Kilbride and Keith Bennett – were children, and searches of the moors focused on them.<sup>75</sup> The first major search drew enormous media attention, with journalists, reporters and thousands of members of the public gathering on the moors, watching the police go about their work, and helping where possible.<sup>76</sup> Daily updates of some prominence – often on the front page, and including pictures – were given in both tabloids and broadsheets. No mention was made of Brady or Hindley in relation to the search, however, until Downey's body had been found later in October. *The Guardian* instead told indirectly of how 'the search was organised after police questioned a man who claimed to have heard another man boast of burying a body on the moor.'<sup>77</sup> This was a reference to Smith and Brady, respectively.

Lesley Ann Downey's body was found on Saddleworth Moor on 16 October 1965. Even *The Times*, with a reputation as the country's dispassionate newspaper of record, slipped into the use of vivid language to describe the discovery: 'working in thick mist and by the light of arc lamps, detectives had recovered the body 1,400ft. up on a bleak hill'.<sup>78</sup> Following police conversations with David Smith, two suitcases belonging to Brady were seized from the left luggage department at Manchester Central Station the previous day. Reports from the prosecution's account in December 1965 gave the public some idea of what was in them. The items included books, belonging to Brady, on 'torture, sexual perversion and cruelty, including the ideas of [Comte de] Sade'.<sup>79</sup> Also in the cases were

photographs and a number of tape recordings. Among the photographs were a number of a young girl in the nude in various pornographic poses. You will hear that in every one of them she has a scarf tied tightly round her mouth and the back of her head, and she is still wearing shoes and socks ... [Other photographs]

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<sup>75</sup> 'Girl's Body Is Found On Moor', *News of the World*, 17 October 1965.

<sup>76</sup> 'Buried Girl's Body Identified', *The Times*, 18 October 1965.

<sup>77</sup> '120 Police in Search for Grave', *The Guardian*, 18 October 1965.

<sup>78</sup> 'Buried Girl's Body Identified'.

<sup>79</sup> 'Prosecution Tells of How a Youth of 17 Died'.



show, among other things, views of the moors in the vicinity of the very spot where the grave of Lesley Ann Downey was discovered.<sup>80</sup>

The moorland locations in which Hindley was seen posing in the photographs had helped the police to find Downey's grave. The ten-year-old had first gone missing on Boxing Day, 1964; police searched for her for days, but could find no trace. She had last been seen alive at a fairground at Hulme Hall Lane. Hindley had picked her up and driven the nine miles to the house on Wardle Brook Avenue. There, Hindley later claimed, Brady had assumed control in the kitchen, making Downey undress, assume pornographic poses and be photographed, the evidence of which was later found in the suitcases.<sup>81</sup> The Attorney General, Sir Elwyn Jones, Q.C., commented during the trial in April 1966 that 'no adjective of the English language [was] appropriate' for the photographs.<sup>82</sup> The courtroom was played a tape recording of sixteen minutes that revealed the final moments of Downey's life, including exchanges between her, Brady and Hindley. Audible were Downey's 'screams, ... whimpering and sobbing sounds', and 'immediately after the last sounds of the child's voice, music was heard – the tunes "Jolly Old St. Nicholas" and "Little Drummer Boy"'.<sup>83</sup> The Attorney General contended that Brady and Hindley had forced Downey to 'put something into her mouth and pack it before she was gagged by a scarf ... she could only really effectively breathe through her nose and you may think it would be a simple matter to smother her'. The pair drove Downey's still-naked body to the moors, where they buried her the same night. She was the fourth victim of five. Brady and Hindley tried to lay the blame for her murder with Smith, with Hindley telling the prosecution in December: 'You know Lesley was at the house. She was brought there by Smith and taken away by Smith'.<sup>84</sup>

After Downey had been discovered, it was reported towards the end of October 1965 that the police were still scouring the moors for bodies, under the

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<sup>80</sup> 'Prosecution Describe Finding of Bodies in Moorland Graves', *The Times*, 9 December 1965.

<sup>81</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 15.

<sup>82</sup> 'Attorney General Says "Perverved Sexual Element" Was Involved in the Moors Killings', *The Times*, 21 April 1966.

<sup>83</sup> 'Two Women at "bodies on Moors" Trial Cover Their Ears', *The Times*, 27 April 1966.

<sup>84</sup> 'Prosecution Describe Finding of Bodies in Moorland Graves'.

codename 'Operation Checkpoint'.<sup>85</sup> Evidence found in Brady's suitcases had led the police to believe that they would find the remains of John Kilbride, a twelve-year-old boy who had gone missing on 23 November 1963.<sup>86</sup> The trial in 1966 heard that Kilbride's name was found in one of Brady's notebooks, and there were further photographs in evidence of Hindley posing on what was a possible gravesite.<sup>87</sup> Kilbride's mother, Sheila, stated to the *News of the World*: 'I went through hell for two years just wondering what had happened to John ... I never believed they might find him ... the wondering and hoping is even worse than actually knowing'.<sup>88</sup> His body was found on 22 October 1965, and whilst the police believed that they would also find the body of Keith Bennett, the search was called off for the winter a few weeks later. It would be 1987 when Bennett's remains were eventually discovered, when Brady was released from prison temporarily to assist a search. On 2 December 1965, Brady and Hindley were formally charged with the crimes for which they would be convicted the following summer, Brady with the murders of all three victims; Hindley with the murders of Evans and Downey, and with receiving, comforting, harbouring, assisting and maintaining Brady in the murder of Kilbride.<sup>89</sup> Reporting from the trial does not reveal as full a story of Kilbride's murder as of Downey or Evans'. It was known only that he went missing from near his home in Ashton-under-Lyne and that there had been a 2,000-strong search after he disappeared; Professor Cyril Polson, responsible for the post-mortem, was unable to determine a cause of death. Brady and Hindley were convicted of this murder on the photographic evidence that had Hindley posing on his grave; the two claimed to know nothing of his death.<sup>90</sup> Later accounts state that the pair approached Kilbride, who had spent the afternoon at the cinema and market, and offered him a lift home. They enticed him with the offer of some sherry, and made a 'detour' to the moors.<sup>91</sup> At trial the prosecution noted a 'roll' in Kilbride's underpants found on the body, which suggested to them that the 'boy

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<sup>85</sup> 'New Hunt On Moors', *News of the World*, 24 October 1965.

<sup>86</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 14.

<sup>87</sup> 'Brady Describes Hitting Youth With Axe'.

<sup>88</sup> 'New Hunt On Moors'.

<sup>89</sup> 'Clerk Accused Of Three Murders', *The Times*, 3 December 1965.

<sup>90</sup> 'Boy's Name In Accused's Exercise Book, Police Say', *The Times*, 29 April 1966.

<sup>91</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 14.

was in some way homosexually assaulted' by Brady – though clarification on how the prosecution reached this conclusion was not offered.<sup>92</sup> Hindley waited in the car whilst Brady carried out the assault and strangled Kilbride with a thin wire, perhaps a shoelace.<sup>93</sup>

This was the broad outline of the case as described to the public in 1965. The trial, which ran from 19 April until 6 May 1966, attracted enormous coverage. The national newspapers reported from Chester Assizes courtroom each day, with the courtroom events retold in intricate detail.<sup>94</sup> The *Manchester Evening News* dedicated a large part of its front page to the trial every day up to and including the verdict, with further detail, generally on pages four to five, inside. The nature of the reporting, including the language used, varied depending on both the type of the newspaper and its locality. In one major respect, however, the reporting was similar: the limited details of Hindley and Brady's sexually abusive crimes. I wondered whether this reflected the lack of detail given in court itself, or rather served as ellipses on the part of the journalists in order to spare their readers the distressing facts. The full transcript of the trial suggests that the answer is probably both – the courtroom language was also limited, but the press made little attempt to delve deeper.<sup>95</sup> Ultimately the judge, Mr Justice Fenton, passing down his verdicts, said to Brady: 'these were three calculated, cruel and cold-blooded murders ... in your case I pass the only sentence which the law now allows, and that is three concurrent sentences of life imprisonment'.<sup>96</sup> To Hindley, Fenton said: 'in your case, Hindley, you have been found guilty of two equally horrible murders and an accessory after the fact of the murder of John Kilbride. On you I pass two concurrent sentences of life imprisonment [plus an additional, concurrent seven years]'.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Goodman, *Moors Murders*, 209.

<sup>93</sup> Topping and Ritchie, *Topping*, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Based on my research of the trial in which I looked at national and regional newspapers.

<sup>95</sup> The full transcript is reproduced in Goodman, *Moors Murders*.

<sup>96</sup> The judge's reference to 'the only sentence which the law now allows' refers to the fact that capital punishment had been abolished in the United Kingdom in 1965; 'Moors Killers Jailed for Life', *Daily Mail*, 7 May 1966.

<sup>97</sup> 'Moors Killers Jailed for Life'.

## Speaking the Unspeakable

When putting together this summary of events and in considering a response to them, one quotation in particular kept coming back to me. Referencing the Lesley Ann Downey murder, Elwyn Jones Q.C. commented that ‘no adjective of the English language [was] appropriate’ for what went on.<sup>98</sup> Jones’ words act as a précis of the ways in which involved parties struggled to vocalise their thoughts and feelings on the case. I have sketched out the details of the events above as a foundation for illustrating that in the British press between 1965 and 1966 there was interest in sex, but only metonymical, circumlocutory ways of talking about the specifics of sex and sexual issues in general, and the details of intergenerational sex and deviancy in particular. The sources suggest that sexual matters were kept distant, strange and unknowable, despite the nature of the printed press’ output indicating a clear interest in such topics. This interest in sex did not translate into an open sexual discourse. The methods used to talk about Brady, Hindley and the case revolved around more familiar or visible ‘perversions’, demonic or gothic themes, sadism, and the ‘unknown’.

Four of the victims, three of them aged twelve or under, were sexually assaulted. The most evidenced case from the trial is that of ten-year-old victim Lesley Ann Downey. Brady and Hindley made tape recordings that document the final moments of her life. Brady took pornographic photographs of her, leaving a visual remnant of the abuse he carried out. Hindley stated in a confession to the police that Brady raped sixteen-year-old Pauline Reade before slitting her throat and burying her on the moors. Brady also sexually assaulted twelve-year-old John Kilbride before strangling and burying him.<sup>99</sup> Yet my research of the period between October 1965 and December 1967 (a period encompassing the initial reporting of Brady and Hindley’s crimes, the trial, and the aftermath) shows that at no stage were their actions described with reference to ‘paedophilia’, ‘paedophiles’, ‘child sexual abuse’ or ‘child sexual exploitation’ in the popular press.<sup>100</sup> I explored in my introductory chapters the

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<sup>98</sup> ‘Attorney General Says “Perverted Sexual Element” Was Involved in the Moors Killings’.

<sup>99</sup> Details of the crimes from Wilson, ‘Introduction: The Moors Murders’, 13.

<sup>100</sup> Based on my survey of national broadsheets, (*The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Times*, *The Telegraph*), national tabloids (*Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, *The Sun*, *News of the World*), local and

problematic, multidisciplinary history of defining terms such as ‘paedophilia’ and ‘child sexual abuse’. Whilst Krafft-Ebing coined the word ‘paedophile’ in the 1880s, the word did not enter popular discourse until the 1970s, when PIE – the subject of my second case study – came to the public’s attention.<sup>101</sup> In the mid-sixties, there were different – arguably limited – ways of discussing sexual crimes against the child. Reportage focused more on the arcane, violent and fatal elements of the crimes, rather than considering sexual attraction to children. It invoked not facts, but themes or feelings: sadism, terror, fascination, and the unknown. Elwyn Jones Q.C. spoke, at the outset of the trial, of the murders containing ‘an abnormal sexual element, a perverted sexual element’ – without any clear indication of what that was. *The Times*’ reporting on the case spoke of ‘sexual interference’.<sup>102</sup> Such phrases – ‘perverted sexual element’ and ‘sexual interference’ – represent vague and shapeless descriptions of sexual attraction to and abuse of children.

Quite apart, however, from the purely terminological challenges in speaking without words such as ‘paedophilia’, the language of the press and courtroom also reveals an indirect and unstructured approach to the essential *nature* of adult sexual abuse of children. One notable example is the supplication of W.L. Mars-Jones Q.C., laying out the prosecution’s charges at Brady and Hindley’s hearing in December 1965, that Chairman of the Magistrates Mrs Dorothy Adamson not look at the pornographic pictures, vital to the case, and later viewed by all members of the jury, of Lesley Ann Downey: ‘Madam, I have not asked you to look at these photographs. I think it would be better if you did not’.<sup>103</sup> On the one hand this displays a severe reluctance to fully involve women in the proceedings – the entire jury, too, was male. We glimpse a reactionary element to a British court system trying to keep nastiness away from the female eye. This echoes other contemporary and non-contemporary cases, most notably the Wolfenden Committee (1954-57), where women made up only

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regional papers (*Gorton & Openshaw Reporter*, *Lancashire Evening Post*, *Manchester Evening News*) and periodicals (*The Spectator*, *LIFE*).

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, *The Times*, where the first use of the word ‘paedophile’ is not found until January 1976, and ‘paedophilia’ in March 1976.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Attorney General Says “Perverted Sexual Element” Was Involved in the Moors Killings’.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Photographs Not Shown to Moors Case Chairman’, *The Times*, 17 December 1965.

three of the fifteen-strong panel.<sup>104</sup> There, the committee initially used the terms ‘Huntleys’ and ‘Palmers’ (after a biscuit brand) to stand in for ‘homosexuals’ and ‘prostitutes’, supposedly to protect the modesty of the females present.<sup>105</sup> Mars-Jones’ comment also suggests an inability to face and engage with the actual details of the Moors case – whether wilful or not. This reflected a wider British context outside of the courtroom in which the issue of ‘child sexual abuse’ *was* recognised – often through the lens of ‘perversion’ or ‘moral danger’ – but institutional responses to it were ‘neither robust nor proactive’, in the words of Lucy Delap.<sup>106</sup>

### Homosexuality and Perversion

Jones’ reference to a ‘perverted sexual element’ also encompassed the murder of a homosexual victim, Edward Evans, whom Brady had *not* sexually assaulted.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, in *The Times* report on Jones’ courtroom comments this was the crime first listed as notable for its sexual perversions. As conspicuous as it may seem to a current-day observer, Jones’ views align with the centrality of homosexuality to conceptions of perversity in the mid-1960s, particularly in the wake of widespread and sustained concerns that amounted, some have argued, to a ‘moral panic’.<sup>108</sup> The recommendations of the Wolfenden Report stated that homosexuality ought no longer to be considered a criminal offence, and it was eventually partially decriminalised in 1967.<sup>109</sup> ‘Paedophilia’, meanwhile, was yet to be ‘discovered’ or at least recast from elite Victorian sexological discourse. The word ‘homosexual’ appeared 138 times in *The Times* alone between 1965 and 1967.<sup>110</sup> Given the context of widespread decriminalisation debates, this figure is not itself evidence of a social panic. However, concerns were often

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<sup>104</sup> Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 10.

<sup>105</sup> Brian Lewis, *Wolfenden’s Witnesses: Homosexuality in Postwar Britain* (London: Springer, 2016), 202.

<sup>106</sup> Lucy Delap, ‘Child Welfare, Child Protection and Sexual Abuse, 1918-1990’, Historical Child Sex Abuse (History & Policy, 30 July 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/child-welfare-child-protection-and-sexual-abuse-1918-1990>.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Attorney General Says “perverted Sexual Element” Was Involved in the Moors Killings’.

<sup>108</sup> See for discussion of this Lewis, *Wolfenden’s Witnesses*, 5.

<sup>109</sup> ‘The Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution’ (London: Home Office, 4 September 1957), 115.

<sup>110</sup> Figures taken from *The Times* Digital Archive, October 1965–December 1967.

raised about predatory 'queers' who were considered a threat to teenage boys and nuclear family values.<sup>111</sup> Jones' comments during the Moors murder trial reflect the way that homosexuality was used as a 'catch-all' for perversity, and particularly for sexual assaults on children. As geographer Richard Phillips puts it succinctly: 'paedophiles are represented as homosexuals'.<sup>112</sup>

The Moors case revealed predatory homosexuality as a totem for fears about children's safety and the family unit. This is encapsulated by a passage in a 1966 account of the murders by John Deane Potter. The final victim Edward Evans, writes Potter, 'drifted from one haunt of homosexuals to another. For Evans was a "queer". Like so many of his kind, he spent his evenings prowling the city's bars in search of a "friend" to share his sexual proclivities'.<sup>113</sup> A letter to the *Lancashire Evening Post* from a 'Worried Mother of 3, Preston' shortly after the Moors trial had finished also reveals the depth of concern regarding homosexuality and the impending bill:

The Bill on homosexuality is about to be introduced. I beg of the decent citizens to fight this unhealthy practice. If the men running this country counsel this perversion, then who can wonder that we have these frightening murders. This vile act is both morally and physically horrifying ... these men are a threat to every youth.<sup>114</sup>

These accounts reflect fears that 'prowling' homosexuals would prey on and corrupt youngsters, effect the breakup of the nuclear family and '[undermine] postwar social reconstruction', as Matt Cook puts it.<sup>115</sup> Now, the most prevalent 'predator' – the 'queer' – had become the prey for Brady and Hindley. That Evans was a homosexual victim and Brady a 'perverted' assailant sparked complicated feelings regarding deviancy, as seen in the above letter and in the courtroom connection of Evans' murder to sexual perversion (despite there

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<sup>111</sup> Houlbrook, , 235, 239.

<sup>112</sup> Richard Phillips, 'Imagined Geographies and Sexuality Politics: The City, the Country and the Age of Consent', in *De-Centring Sexualities: Politics and Representations Beyond the Metropolis*, Critical Geographies Series (London: Routledge, 2000), 117.

<sup>113</sup> Potter, *The Monsters of the Moors*, 11.

<sup>114</sup> 'A Threat To Every Youth', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 20 May 1966, sec. Letters.

<sup>115</sup> Matt Cook, 'Queer Conflicts: Love, Sex and War, 1914-1967', in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex Between Men Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Matt Cook (Oxford: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 145-77.

being no evidence of sexual assault). We get a sense that Evans, a young, outcast homosexual, was in fact a *part* of the perversion, and even complicit in his own murder.

### **Othering Brady and Hindley**

During the Moors trial, there was a sense that to talk about “good” and “bad” acts or persons was somehow inadequate. To moralise or to categorise the child victims was also impossible in what was, to many, an unworldly and incomprehensible affair. There is, as such, evidence in press reportage of framing the perpetrators, and both the nature and location – physical and imagined – of their crimes as other, unknown, or unknowable. Seemingly unable to phrase and frame the true nature of Brady and Hindley’s actions, the press tended to position the case outside of human potential for understanding. Their crimes were framed in ‘unknowable’ terms through the use of mystic and demonic imagery and language in reporting, in the focus on Brady’s reading materials and interest in Hitler and Comte de Sade, and in the eventual ‘gothic’ burial spaces on Saddleworth Moor.<sup>116</sup> Newspaper descriptions also constructed a sense of demonic otherness in commenting on Brady and Hindley’s appearance or character. This feeling of the ‘unknown’ inherent in the Moors murders stands out as one of the most prominent reporting tropes in accounts of intergenerational sex in the postwar period. Such themes were to recur during media-sustained panics around the supposed ritual abuse of children in cases such as Cleveland (1987), Rochdale (1990) and the Orkney Islands (1991).

During the trial, whilst reporters had a legal obligation to remain as impartial as possible, there was significant slippage in descriptive language. The *News of the World*, reporting on courtroom events from May 1966, spoke of Brady’s ‘little eyes’ that ‘seemed to turn red and shifty’. The same article spoke of a ‘more than breathless’, ‘choking’ silence in the courtroom.<sup>117</sup> Such language indicates a displacement of the actual nature of the crimes in the reporting of

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<sup>116</sup> Roy Hattersley, ‘The Moors Murders Changed How We Look at Crime’, *The Times*, 18 August 2012.

<sup>117</sup> Miller and Nott, ‘Curtain Falls on Moor Murder Drama’.



the court case. In this case, the breathless and choking silence of the courtroom tells an indirect story about the method with which Brady murdered Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans: strangulation. Brady throttled Evans until his ‘gurgling’, which Brady found intolerable, stopped. It also acts as a metaphor for the way the newspapers – particularly the *News of the World* – reported on the court case: shutting out the realities of the crimes, and reverting to metonym and displacement. As soon as the trial was over, journalists from national newspapers rushed to submit their impressions of the killers. With convictions confirmed, there was more freedom for widespread and robust declamation. These were often constructed as psychologised portraits of Brady and Hindley that highlighted the pair’s distance from the general populace. The desire to demonise and to distance Brady and Hindley is therefore evident both in what was written and what was not.

Maurice Richardson, for *The Observer*, produced a well-received article (later published in a collected edition of his work) on his perceptions of Brady and Hindley. He found it ‘less difficult to empathise with Jack the Ripper than with these two’, and commented on their ‘Gothic’, ‘hysteric’, ‘atrocious’, or ‘psychopathic’ tendencies.<sup>118</sup> Opinion pieces in even the soberer national broadsheets were, as Richardson’s example demonstrates, prone to frankness of opinion and florid prose. Professor and journalist Roy Greenslade has noted that Richardson’s piece stands out ‘like a lone beacon amid the hysterical, and sometime obnoxious, coverage by the popular papers’ at the time because it actually attempted to explain how the pair could have committed such crimes.<sup>119</sup> Perhaps, but Richardson’s piece also reflects a media preoccupation with the psychologising of Brady and Hindley. There had been a wider postwar interest in the psychology and psychoanalysis of events, public figures, and famous criminals, particularly as a tool for societal understanding.<sup>120</sup> This was something of a shift from the moralising bent of Victorian Britain, where

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<sup>118</sup> Maurice Richardson, ‘What Is One to Make of the Moors Murders?’, *The Observer*, 8 May 1966, sec. Weekend Review. Perhaps Jack the Ripper was not the most apt analogy, given the way his crimes have been glamourised in their representation (see Julia Laite and Judith Walkowitz).

<sup>119</sup> Roy Greenslade, *Press Gang: How Newspapers Make Profits from Propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2004), 233.

<sup>120</sup> See for instance Chris Waters, ‘Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and the State: Discourses of Homosexual Identity in Interwar Britain’, in *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 166.

'evaluation of character remained central' to criminal narratives.<sup>121</sup> The historical academy itself had its own psychohistorical moment, sparked by Erik H. Erikson's 1959 work *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* and William Langer's address to the historical community to use psychological methods in their work.<sup>122</sup>

Psychologising articles examined the killers' backgrounds as well as paying attention to their physical appearances and habits throughout the trial. Of Brady, Richardson wrote that 'one of the first things you notice about him is his bad colour: pale mud. He really does look terribly sick'. Hindley, on the other hand, was 'blooming': 'the Victorians would have admired her'.<sup>123</sup> With these statements Richardson displaced and distanced Hindley as an anachronism, not belonging in her own time: not one of us. Pamela Johnson recalled the moment at Chester Assizes courtroom where Hindley met her gaze: 'she catches my eyes and holds them. I am not at all given to Gothic romanticism; yet those few moments ... fill me with terror.' Her fear was matched by that of many reporters and even the police, with officers taking it in turns to take Hindley's food to her jail cell to avoid spending too much time around her: 'this is, of course, not a physical but a spiritual fear'.<sup>124</sup> Johnson's account gives an idea of the extent to which people associated Hindley and her partner Brady with the arcane, the ritual and the spiritual. She presents Hindley as an almost supernatural, devilish figure, feared to have powers beyond that of the normal human being – effecting a 'Gothic' curse upon Johnson with her eyes, or reversing the laws of physics to break through her cell bars and attack her jailors.

In a *Daily Mail* 'Newsight' feature on Brady and Hindley published immediately after the trial in May 1966, the reader was invited to take a look at 'who they are'. Brady, we learn, was 'cruel to cats', was 'generally suspected of having decapitated four white rabbits on the estate [where he lived] shortly before his tenth birthday', and was obsessed with Nazism at school.<sup>125</sup> In adulthood, noted Johnson, his interests manifested in a library of seventeen

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<sup>121</sup> Nicola Lacey, 'Psychologising Jekyll, Demonising Hyde: The Strange Case of Criminal Responsibility', *Criminal Law and Philosophy* 4, no. 2 (1 June 2010): 109.

<sup>122</sup> William L. Langer, 'The Next Assignment', *American Historical Review*, 63, 2 (1958), 287

<sup>123</sup> Richardson, 'What Is One to Make of the Moors Murders?'

<sup>124</sup> Johnson, "Who's To Blame When a Murderer Strikes?", 67.

<sup>125</sup> Newsight, 'Ian Brady 28 Myra Hindley 23: Who They Are', *Daily Mail*, 7 May 1966.

books found in his study that focused on Hitler, fascism, sadism, de Sade, corporal punishment, flagellation, and sex crimes.<sup>126</sup> Hindley was remembered for her 'thin legs, big feet and man-sized hands' by peers from school, would fool her grandmother to cover her 'illicit nights out', and 'eventually became unable to speak without swearing and talked about "filthy niggers"'.<sup>127</sup> Such pieces looked at the murderers' childhoods or younger selves in an attempt, seemingly, to find evidence that they had been *born* wrong-minded, and were by extension acting without the usual limits of self-control. Colin Wilson, the British writer, later noted in an introduction to Ian Brady's own book that following one of the murders, and despite his lack of belief in any God, Brady turned upwards to the sky, shook his fist, and shouted 'take that, you bastard'. This detail speaks of an inverted sacrifice, or even a challenge, to God, positioning Brady as a kind of antichrist or demon.<sup>128</sup> The idea that he possessed diabolic powers was perhaps exacerbated by Hindley's own words: 'within months he had convinced me there was no God at all: he could have told me the earth was flat, the moon was made of green cheese and the sun rose in the West, I would have believed him'.<sup>129</sup> Brady and Hindley were positioned as unknowable beings. Media writing on the Moors murderers from the 1960s therefore foreshadows later coverage of paedophilic cases, particularly in recent years, where the paedophile is often portrayed as a kind of obsessive and impulsive freak, outcast, or monster.<sup>130</sup> For Hindley's 'man-sized hands', see the archetypal conception of the modern-day paedophile, 'the rather grubby, inadequate loner; a misfit who is not "one of us"'.<sup>131</sup> Although the actual nature of the crimes for which Brady and Hindley were attracting so much comment was not detailed in the way that it may have been later, there are representational similarities today in the dehumanisation and othering of sex offenders in the media.

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<sup>126</sup> Edward Sagarin, 'Review: On Iniquity: Some Personal Reflections Arising out of the Moors Murder Trial by Pamela Hansford Johnson', *Salmagundi* 2, no. 1 (5) (1 April 1967): 95.

<sup>127</sup> Newsight, 'Ian Brady 28 Myra Hindley 23: Who They Are'.

<sup>128</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 26.

<sup>129</sup> Cited in Wilson, 11.

<sup>130</sup> See 'Who is the Abuser?' in preceding chapter for discussion of this point. Also CJP Lee, *Pervasive Perversions: Paedophilia and Child Sexual Abuse in Media/Culture* (London: Free Association Books, 2005), 10.

<sup>131</sup> Jewkes, *Media and Crime*, 96.

## Dangerous Spaces

When Ian Brady was nine years old, he visited Loch Lomond. According to writer Jean Ritchie, it was a transformative experience, 'a day of discovery. He discovered in himself a deep affinity with the wild, rugged and empty scenery around the lake. He was moved by the grandeur of the hills, awed by the vastness of the sky'.<sup>132</sup> Such accounts of Brady played on his love of nature in order to portray the moors as his 'natural' domain, like a wild animal. Reflecting on the Moors murders in a 2012 article, former Labour politician and journalist Roy Hattersley argued that 'what above all else distinguishes this from other moral outrages was its location ... Five children slaughtered and buried on a moor high on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border is a horror that, all other adjectives aside, can legitimately be called gothic'.<sup>133</sup> Journalists focused on space, and the particular location of the crimes, as another way of indirectly positioning Brady and Hindley themselves as something *other*. Even before the public were fully aware of the identities of the defendants, articles mentioned the 'darkness [falling] over the grim, mist-laden moors' as police searched for bodies in October 1965.<sup>134</sup> One article from the *News of the World* speaks of October 1965's 'gruesome' discovery of a young girl (not yet identified in the press as Lesley Ann Downey). It describes the police working in 'fog-shrouded Yorkshire moors' under the 'garish light of arc lamps and torches', digging in 'peaty soil' near a 'bleak hillock'. Downey's bones were 'gently removed' as 'flashes lit the sky', and it was altogether a 'fantastic scene'. In an aside, the article notes that 'the spot where the grave was discovered is in an area used by courting couples', alluding to sex and death on this 'bleak moorland'.<sup>135</sup> In a later article, the same newspaper spoke of John Kilbride's family's 'pilgrimage' to the moors: 'in biting winds and driving rain a family made a pilgrimage yesterday to bleak, barren Saddleworth Moor'.<sup>136</sup> The language in these articles constructed a space thick with mystical, preternatural imagery and energy.

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<sup>132</sup> Wilson, 'Introduction: The Moors Murders', 7.

<sup>133</sup> Hattersley, 'The Moors Murders Changed How We Look at Crime'.

<sup>134</sup> 'New Hunt On Moors'.

<sup>135</sup> 'Girl's Body Is Found On Moor'.

<sup>136</sup> 'Family Pilgrimage To A Moor Grave', *News of the World*, 31 October 1965.

These were not new devices, particularly the association between crimes, the unknown, and haunted moorland. As Hattersley has it, 'literature is to blame ... moors evoke – if only in the subconscious memory – a picture of bleak terror'.<sup>137</sup> Victorian publications sometimes carried either news reports or short stories that accentuated the notion of these bleak landscapes. May Crommelin wrote of the 'solitary and browned' moors in a short story published in *The Leisure Hour* titled 'A Man Hunt on the Moor' (1891).<sup>138</sup> More popularly, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes investigated a case at Baskerville Hall, set amongst desolate, terrifying moorland in Dartmoor (1902). And Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) gave a gothic portrayal of the moors in their Yorkshire location: 'all that is darkest and most disturbing in the novels of the Brontë sisters takes place on heath and heather-covered windswept hills'.<sup>139</sup> The moors are peaceful and quiet, but also eerie and otherworldly. With this tradition, it was little surprise that the spaces in which Brady and Hindley operated attracted even further interest. Brady himself has noted that 'it fascinates ... because of the dramatic background – fog, capes, cobbled streets. The Moors is the same thing. *Wuthering Heights* and all that, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*'.<sup>140</sup> There is more to this assertion than simply the media's language and mood. Both of the works cited by Brady were widely consumed in 1960s Britain. The 1939 film version of *Wuthering Heights*, starring Laurence Olivier as Heathcliff, was broadcast twice on British television in 1965, with one further radio reading of the novel in the same year.<sup>141</sup> In 1967 Olivier's film was broadcast once again on the BBC, as was a two-part theatrical production and a four-part television serial. In 1959, Peter Cushing starred in the first colour adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, to popular and critical acclaim.<sup>142</sup> Between 1964 and 1968 the BBC produced an epic 28-episode series of

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<sup>137</sup> Hattersley, 'The Moors Murders Changed How We Look at Crime'.

<sup>138</sup> May Crommelin, 'A Man Hunt on the Moor', ed. James Macauley, *The Leisure Hour*, Jan. 1877-Oct. 1903, November 1891, 45–53.

<sup>139</sup> Hattersley, 'The Moors Murders Changed How We Look at Crime'.

<sup>140</sup> "'I'm as Famous as Jack the Ripper": Ian Brady Compares His "theatrical" Crimes to Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in Four-Hour Mad Ramble', *Mail Online*, 26 June 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2348695/Ian-Brady-compares-theatrical-crimes-Jack-Ripper-Wuthering-Heights-4-hour-mad-ramble.html>.

<sup>141</sup> All broadcast details in this paragraph were taken from a search of television and radio listings from *The Times* Digital Archive.

<sup>142</sup> Alan Barnes, *Sherlock Holmes on Screen: The Complete Film and TV History* (London: Titan Books Limited, 2011), 63.

Sherlock Holmes mysteries, featuring ominous titles such as *The Man with the Twisted Lip* and *The Devil's Foot*. The 1965 episodes, broadcast during the same year the news of Brady and Hindley's crimes broke, averaged 11 million viewers per episode.<sup>143</sup> Peter Cushing reprised his role as Holmes for the 1968 run, which attracted upwards of 15.5 million viewers per episode.<sup>144</sup>

January 1966 saw the release of the feature film *A Study in Terror*, a new Holmes story focusing on the pursuit of Jack the Ripper. This was released during the preliminary stages of the Moors murder trial, ultimately the event that would place Brady and Hindley within a long narrative of infamous British murderers that includes Jack the Ripper. Historian Clive Bloom has written about the way the Ripper's East End has been portrayed on film, such as in *A Study of Terror*:

The prevailing moods of the East End are alternatively terror and paranoia ... People do not live in the East End of the film world so much as 'creep' and 'cower' ... The scene must enhance the frisson of horror... it is airless, claustrophobic and without escape or egress; there is no sky, nothing indicates an outside world.<sup>145</sup>

Charles Dickens, an insomniac 'night walker', also wrote about the threatening or mysterious landscapes of London: 'the river had an awful look, the buildings on the banks were muffled in black shrouds, and the reflected lights seemed to originate deep in the water, as if the spectres of suicides were holding them to show where they went down'.<sup>146</sup> W.T. Stead, in his journalistic crusade against child prostitution, animated London as a threatening nocturnal landscape of 'night prowlers', 'darkness', and 'awful hell'.<sup>147</sup> Although the locations are different, there are clear similarities here with the manner in which the British press portrayed Brady and Hindley's moors, with its 'garish light of arc lamps and torches' noted by the *News of the World*. In all examples the language builds a sense of invisible, predatory evil that lurks in the gloom. 1960s journalistic

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<sup>143</sup> Peter Haining, *The Television Sherlock Holmes* (Virgin Books Limited, 1994), 65.

<sup>144</sup> Barnes, *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*, 65.

<sup>145</sup> Clive Bloom, 'Jack the Ripper - a Legacy in Pictures', in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 240-41.

<sup>146</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1861), 189.

<sup>147</sup> W.T. Stead, 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon IV: The Report of Our Secret Commission', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 July 1885, <http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/pmg/tribute/mt1.php>.

writing on the Moors case can be seen, stylistically, as extractions of the *Maiden Tribute* and the murder mystery format. Newspaper editors were familiar with public interest and cultural memory, and tailored output and language as such. The popularity, in particular, of the reimagined versions of *Wuthering Heights* and the various Holmes incarnations suggests a British public attuned to predatory, horrific and mysterious tales, often involving murder. Members of the media participated fully in these linguistic tropes.

1960s press approaches reflected and continued postwar paradigms about predators, psychopathy, stranger danger and public space that I discussed in the preceding chapter. This related to a landscape in which spaces such as parks, cinemas and street corners came to be seen as insecure, with warnings issued about unidentified, dangerous men. It was an echo of interwar 'psychopath' fears common to Britain and the United States, centring on threats to young girls. A 1965 report on a separate case told of the murder by a stranger in Lupset, near Wakefield, Yorkshire, of a fourteen-year-old girl, 'stabbed to death ... on her way home from a quarry at Horbury where she had been sailing'. The suggested advice from the police was 'to keep teenage daughters indoors and not let them roam to isolated places'.<sup>148</sup> Such advice speaks of a preoccupation with the idea that those who posed a threat to the country's children were always strangers who lurked, rather than family members or acquaintances, and that attacks on children were inextricably linked to surprise, violence and, ultimately, death, rather than the unapproachable realities of abuse within the home. Brady and Hindley fit this predator 'mould' as, before burying their victims in sequestered pockets of moorland, they collected their victims from very public spaces – stations, fairs, or high streets.

On the one hand, such spaces were seen as safe for children. The author Jacqueline Wilson, for example, states that 'it wasn't that unusual to let young children walk to school by themselves'.<sup>149</sup> Social historian David Kynaston notes that children would walk around unaccompanied, with bus conductors and park-keepers there to keep an eye on them. Crime levels, he claims, were low

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<sup>148</sup> 'Police Warning to Parents after Murder', *The Guardian*, 13 October 1965.

<sup>149</sup> David Kynaston, *Family Britain, 1951-57* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 542.

with front doors left unlocked, and bikes left unchained and unstolen.<sup>150</sup> This was to some degree evidence of the 'family Britain' quality that Kynaston affixes to the 1950s. But on the other hand, and as explored in prior chapters, there was a growing social connection being made between predators, public spaces and notions of sexual crime. This connection evoked narratives of both the Victorian era and the 1920s, during which 'the public city was constructed as a threatening place, populated by dangerous men who preyed on vulnerable children'.<sup>151</sup> Brady and Hindley exploited conflicting narratives about safe and unsafe places. The presence of Hindley, a woman, meant that they did not fit the typical, 'psychopathic male stranger' model. In this way they hid in plain sight, deceiving children into their trust with offers of sherry, and took them to barren landscapes where the sexual murders were committed. These were the unsafe, unknowable, bleak public spaces such as Saddleworth Moor.

### **Local Pain**

Brady and Hindley operated in both known and unknown, safe and unsafe public spaces. Yet they also committed their crimes in private, domestic spaces. Lesley Ann Downey was photographed pornographically – and Edward Evans was murdered – in the house on Wardle Brook Avenue whilst Hindley's grandmother slept upstairs. Reading the details of this case therefore reveals a grim irony. Although it had not yet been 'discovered' in 1960s Britain, the hegemonic type of child sexual abuse was not that instigated by strangers, but rather that by family members or acquaintances. Such abuse tended to take place within the space of the family home, which is where the crimes against Downey and Evans were perpetrated. At a time when the extent of familial abuse was not clear – even if it was the actual experience of most abused victims – it was this domestic location on Wardle Brook Avenue that carried the greatest impact for local people. The immediacy of it came as a shock to neighbours, and this was reflected in the sober reporting of local newspapers.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Kynaston, 543.

<sup>151</sup> On Victorian London see Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*; on 1920s London see Houlbrook, *Queer London*.

<sup>152</sup> Based on reviews of *Manchester Evening News* and *Lancashire Evening Post*, 1-10 May, 1966



Striking in the regional press at the time the verdicts had been handed down was the sudden withdrawal of prominence given to the case. The *Manchester Evening News*, which had given its front pages exclusively to the trial for the preceding two weeks, offering extremely detailed accounts of the court proceedings until 6 May 1966, gave only a cursory acknowledgement of the trial verdict in the next edition. On 9 May there was absolutely no mention of the case.<sup>153</sup> The same is true in the *Lancashire Evening Post*, printed in Preston, which had fully reported the trial for its duration. The issue directly following the end of the case restricted its coverage of the verdict to a small, sober piece on the seventh page.<sup>154</sup> This chimes with media historians' Soothill and Walby's theory of local media's painful attachment to the realities of events, acting sensitively in turn. In a 1984 song about the murders, The Smiths hinted at the way that local guilt plays a part in this process, too:

‘Oh Manchester, so much to answer for  
Oh Manchester, so much to answer for’.<sup>155</sup>

Music writer Jon Savage argued that the Moors murders were ‘such a stain on the city, it was as if the Sixties ended right then and there in Manchester’. The lyrics betray Morrissey’s preoccupation with Manchester’s ‘guilty’ or ‘dark side’ as a city – as well as his desire to explore the ‘black, absurd and hateful’ elements of England, as journalist Tony Parsons had it.<sup>156</sup>

To take scholar of journalism Richard Keeble’s view, ‘there is nothing inherently local about local newspapers. Much of what is considered to be national news is local in nature and source’, and local journalists do not work in a ‘vacuum’.<sup>157</sup> Nonetheless, there is little doubt that local publics suffered acutely and immediately from crimes in their communities – and they were the first to be involved in picking up the pieces. A separate story from 1965 noted the crowd of first 400, and then 1,000 – ‘mainly women’ – who went to court at Barking to castigate child murderer John Francis Williams, only eighteen

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<sup>153</sup> *Manchester Evening News*, 7 and 9 May, 1966

<sup>154</sup> *Lancashire Evening Post*, 7 May, 1966

<sup>155</sup> The Smiths, *Suffer Little Children*, The Smiths (Rough Trade, 1984).

<sup>156</sup> Sean O’Hagan, ‘Sean O’Hagan on The Smiths’, *The Guardian*, 5 May 2007, sec. Music, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/may/06/popandrock.features1>.

<sup>157</sup> Richard Keeble, *The Newspapers Handbook* (London: Routledge, 2001), 148.

himself.<sup>158</sup> This echoed the police search for Lesley Ann Downey's body, which was joined by a large group of local citizens. The thread to community, and of community being riven by abuses against the child – which itself was a symbol of the future of community – is one that recurs throughout narratives of child sexual abuse over the entire postwar period. The third case study focusing on events in Cleveland in 1987 will illustrate this, analysing the intersection of child sexual abuse, local press campaigning, and concern for the child.

### Comparative Cases

The Moors murders are often considered in absolute terms, a unique or 'great' crime in the lineage of Jack the Ripper. Myra Hindley has been dubbed 'The Most Evil Woman in Britain' and Ian Brady 'the most hated man'.<sup>159</sup> Brady himself was keenly aware of the history of 'serial killers' (although that term was not commonly used until the 1970s) and considered his 'self-representation' within that dubious heritage. He had read, for example, about murderers who worked in pairs, such as Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, perpetrators of a famous killing in Chicago in 1924.<sup>160</sup> To add some closing comparative context, I have selected some other violent crimes against children from the mid-1960s to see how they, too, were spoken about in the British media. Specific sexual details of Brady and Hindley's crimes were, as I have discussed, largely excluded from the newspapers of the time, and the pair themselves often described in predatory or demonic terms. The Moors case was not unique in this amongst child sexual crimes. Published just underneath an article on the Moors case, *The Guardian* reported a child murder on 21 October 1965 that had echoes in a famous later case.<sup>161</sup> A nineteen-year-old attacker had

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<sup>158</sup> 'Remanded on Charge of Murdering Girl', *The Guardian*, 8 October 1965; Williams had murdered eight-year-old Catherine Menzies Duncan.

<sup>159</sup> Downing, *The Subject of Murder*, 100; Duncan Campbell, "'An Almost Biblical Notion of Evil' – Why Ian Brady Haunts the British Psyche', *The Guardian*, 16 May 2017, sec. UK news, 100, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/16/ian-brady-myra-hindley-biblical-notion-of-evil-haunt-british-psyche-moors-murders>.

<sup>160</sup> Downing, *The Subject of Murder*, 100.

<sup>161</sup> The later case of 1993 was the murder of toddler James Bulger by two older boys, also in Liverpool.

killed a nine-year-old boy, and left his body in a railway tunnel in Liverpool.<sup>162</sup> *The Times* spoke of how the boy's clothing had been 'disarranged' before he was asphyxiated with a scarf, suggesting again a euphemistic holding back of fuller details.<sup>163</sup> This reporting also echoed the references made to scarves and terms like 'sexual interference' used in the Moors case.<sup>164</sup> Later, reporting on the 'Cannock Chase' murder trial in 1969, in which killer Raymond Morris raped and murdered a six-year-old girl in the West Midlands, still alluded only to 'assaults', rather than anything more specific.<sup>165</sup> There are, however, some more unencumbered examples of reporting on the sexual murder of *adults*. Following one of the (still unsolved) Hammersmith 'nude murders' in 1964, in which a killer labelled 'Jack the Stripper' murdered a series of prostitutes in West London, the *Daily Mirror* reported on 'an attractive brunette ... naked – except for stockings. A pair of nylon panties were stuffed in her mouth'. The sense here is that the victims, being 'prostitutes', were fair journalistic game for value judgements ('attractive') and speculative sexual descriptions ('one theory is that she had taken part in a drugs-and-sex orgy') than were innocent child victims; as a result press language was looser.<sup>166</sup>

In June 1966, a month after the Moors trial, the *News of the World* – in a seemingly ironic response to claims of prurience from critics – asked their readers the question in a special edition: 'Is Britain obsessed with sex?' The same issue contained a story about ten and fourteen-year-old girls who walked around Liverpool offering to have sex for money. The father of the younger girl phlegmatically suggested that it was 'just a passing phase'.<sup>167</sup> A piece on the front page echoed the Moors coverage in its description of a sexual assault on a young woman in London, with the unidentified offender labelled the 'Beast of Midnight Path'.<sup>168</sup> Such a label played up again to the predatory model of sexual assailant: a 'beast' or monster that lurked in the darkness ('Midnight Path'), committed sexual assault, but retained his/its anonymity and potential to

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<sup>162</sup> 'Man Accused of Murder', *The Guardian*, 21 October 1965.

<sup>163</sup> 'Boy's Body In Tunnel: Youth Accused', *The Times*, 22 October 1965.

<sup>164</sup> 'Attorney General Says "perverted Sexual Element" Was Involved in the Moors Killings'.

<sup>165</sup> Arthur Osman, 'Public Is Outraged by Cannock Case, Court Told', *The Times*, 18 February 1969.

<sup>166</sup> 'Nude-In-River Murder Hunt', *Daily Mirror*, 4 February 1964.

<sup>167</sup> "Is Britain Obsessed With Sex?", *News of the World*, June 12, 1966.

<sup>168</sup> "Beast of Midnight Path", *News of the World*, June 12, 1966.

threaten others. Despite the shapeless nature of the attacker, little was revealed about the victim or the physical details or bodily traces of the attack itself – in stark contrast to Somerfield's assertions that the *News of the World* cared more for victim than attacker, but very much in line with reporting on the Moors case.

A focus on assailant, rather than survivor, was common in crime reporting. In October 1965 the *News of the World* published a story about Cecil Samuel Pengelly, 32, who raped a thirteen-year-old girl in her home whilst pressing a gun to her head. Again, the descriptors are geared to shock the reader. 'The man in the blazer became a figure of terror ... he grabbed the girl and twisted her arm ... "Don't speak or I'll shoot", he snarled'.<sup>169</sup> The report noted Pengelly's lawyer's claim that his client had 'years of good service' prior to the crime and had now 'ruined his future' – although his wife would stand by him. The behaviour was due to a 'change in his make up'.<sup>170</sup> What of the survivor's future? Such reasoning suggests that the rape was automatic, committed because Pengelly's psyche or persona had changed. It hints at the gendered nature of criminal reporting, with male offenders marked out for their seemingly uncontrollable urges. Like a predatory animal, he acted on instinct. This echoes the ways, detailed above, that newspapers described Brady – as 'other', compulsive and freakish. By the same token, the press reserved particular criticism for Hindley because she showed no signs of the rational, contained, caring nature that a woman was expected to hold. What is absent from the Pengelly report is an engagement with what the attack meant for the victim, and any kind of positing of the crime within structured categories. In the same month, *The Guardian* ran a report about a fourteen-year-old girl, Elsie Frost, who had been stabbed to death when walking home. Again the assailant was portrayed as a predator, with the police warning that he might 'strike' again – although the report did not state whether or not there was a sexual element to the murder.<sup>171</sup> In noting these cases, I show that the Moors murders were not isolated either in nature, or in the ways that people reacted to them. 1960s newspapers heavily documented and 'othered' the sexual abuse and sexual murder of children.

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<sup>169</sup> 'He Held a Gun to Her Head', *News of the World*, 24 October 1965.

<sup>170</sup> 'He Held a Gun to Her Head'.

<sup>171</sup> 'Police Warning to Parents after Murder'.

## Epilogue

This chapter has discussed mid-sixties media representations of child sexual crime by examining press coverage of the Moors murders, setting this against the wider sexual and media contexts of the decade. When I first started reading these sources my reaction was that the research results revealed an *absence* of language. This was because I immediately slipped into reading the sources anachronistically, using a current-day linguistic filter and expecting to uncover usage of terms such as ‘paedophilia’ and ‘child sexual abuse’. I could find no such terms, but more than this, I noted how such ‘absences’ were conceptual as well as linguistic, signalling an inability on the part of courtroom and media actors – whether wilful or not – to directly engage with the sexual nature of the crimes. I wondered if lawyers and media outlets were deliberately omitting the precise details of the case, whether for moral or legal reasons. But in considering absence, I was eliding rich linguistic presences. What the news coverage of the Moors murders reveals is not proof of historical silences, but sexual and linguistic *codes*. There were indeed ways of talking about child sexual abuse and crime, although they were often quite different to current day methods and forms of understanding – and they did fall short of directly and structurally addressing the nature of the crimes. They most commonly took the form of metonyms, euphemisms and displacements, substitute language that replaced the unsayable with more palatable, familiar (and often salacious) ways of speaking: predatory assailants, an interest in sadism, female ‘wrongness’, child murder, gothic spaces, and (homo)sexual ‘perversion’. The combination of such striking themes also explains, perhaps, why the case has attained such a particular and lasting prominence.

Two weeks after Ian Brady’s death on 15 May 2017, the *Daily Star* ran an online poll asking its readers the following question: ‘Were the Moors murderers Britain’s most evil couple?’ *Star* readers felt that they were, with 81% selecting the voting option that suggested Brady and Hindley ‘rot in hell for

what they did to those children'.<sup>172</sup> Brady's death, with the widespread press reaction it inspired, seems an apt historical staging post at which to consider the ongoing story of media representations of the Moors case. Commenting on one of the other great 'stories' of the 1960s, the Profumo Affair, historian Richard Farmer has argued that 'what the scandal is believed to be *about* mutates in response to the time and place in which its meaning is debated'.<sup>173</sup> A look at posthumous perspectives on Ian Brady suggests indeed that some codes evolve, but others endure. That 2017 *Daily Star* poll, for one, came underneath an article foregrounding Brady's 'secret gay romps', echoing the way that homosexuality stood as a totem for other perversions in the 1960s. His obituary in *The Guardian*, meanwhile, recalled Maurice Richardson's 1966 appraisal in *The Observer*. Richardson had written then of Brady's 'bad colour: pale mud. He really does look terribly sick'.<sup>174</sup> 51 years later, Peter Stanford employed similar tropes, commenting on his 'cold grey eyes, boney face ... (and) his grisly dreams'. In Stanford's view, 'few murderers have so haunted the public imagination as did Ian Brady'.<sup>175</sup> There is a strong residual sense in current writing of 'othering' – portraying Brady as a ghastly being 'haunting' the public, or his facial features as deathlike.

Other obituaries played on his supposedly inhuman, otherworldly attributes and powers. *The Sun* looked back on the 'disturbed life of monster Ian Brady', describing him as 'warped', 'evil', and harbouring 'dark fantasies'. The paper settled on his 'profound inhumanity'.<sup>176</sup> Peter Gould, a former BBC journalist, wrote for that institution in 2017 that Brady was the 'personification of dark forces that we struggle to understand'.<sup>177</sup> The unsolved murder of Elsie

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<sup>172</sup> Tom Evans, 'Ian Brady's Secret Gay Romps: Killer "Had Male Lover and NEVER Slept with Myra Hindley"', *Daily Star*, 28 May 2017, <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/616390/Ian-Brady-Moors-murders-Myra-Hindley-homosexual-relationship-David-Smith-sex-killing>.

<sup>173</sup> Farmer, 'The Profumo Affair in Popular Culture', 465.

<sup>174</sup> Richardson, 'What Is One to Make of the Moors Murders?'

<sup>175</sup> Peter Stanford, 'Ian Brady Obituary', *The Guardian*, 15 May 2017, sec. UK news, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/15/ian-brady-obituary>.

<sup>176</sup> Mike Ridley and Jean Ritchie, 'We Take a Closer Look at the Disturbed Life of Monster Ian Brady', *The Sun*, 17 May 2017, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/uncategorized/3578694/from-killing-cats-and-setting-a-classmate-on-fire-to-becoming-britains-most-evil-serial-killer-we-look-at-the-disturbed-life-of-ian-brady/>.

<sup>177</sup> Peter Gould, 'My Letters from the Moors Murderer', *BBC News*, 16 May 2017, sec. UK, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39925965>.

Frost (1965), discussed earlier, also returned to the news in the mid-2010s, with a 10-part BBC Radio 4 documentary asking ‘who killed Elsie Frost?’<sup>178</sup> The cold case was reopened by West Yorkshire police in 2016, with primary suspect Peter Pickering dying before charge in April 2018. Pickering, imprisoned for a separate child murder, seemed to have played up to the press’ linguistic tropes himself with a 1970 note: “sex is predominant in my mind – eclipsing all else. Maybe I will be a sex maniac proper. Rape, torture, kill”. In press reports on his death, he was described as the ‘Beast of Wombwell’, a moniker redolent of those ascribed to ‘predatory’ killers in the 1960s, such as the ‘Beast of Midnight Path’ mentioned in this chapter.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, Raymond Morris was remembered as the ‘Monster of Cannock Chase’ in a December 2017 article about a 1969 murder case.<sup>180</sup> This shows that the ‘monsterring’ of offenders is not restricted to prior eras. Recent portrayals of ‘paedophiles’ and child murderers often present their desires and crimes as predatory, involuntary, unfixable, and inhuman.

There are, however, growing pockets of evidence that reflect the ways in which our current ‘time and place’, to borrow Farmer’s motif, are having an impact on how the Moors murderers are represented. Between 1965 and 1967, Brady was not described as a ‘paedophile’ anywhere in the press. But a September 2017 *Guardian* report – the product of a temporal environment laden with concern about sexual attraction to and abuse of children – revealed that Brady was discussed in terms of his ‘deviant sexual disorders, including sexual sadism and paedophilia’ during the inquest into his death.<sup>181</sup> Other recent articles have described Brady as a ‘paedophile killer’ and ‘Britain’s most infamous paedophile’.<sup>182</sup> Had Brady committed his crimes today, the tabloid

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<sup>178</sup> ‘Who Killed Elsie Frost?’, *iPM* (BBC Radio 4, 7 July 2015), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vn2mt/episodes/downloads>.

<sup>179</sup> “‘Beast of Wombwell’ Died after a Heart Attack, Inquest Hears’, *The Guardian*, 6 April 2018, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/06/beast-of-wombwell-died-after-a-heart-attack-inquest-hears-peter-pickering>.

<sup>180</sup> Paddy Dinham, ‘Play about Killer Who Raped and Murdered Seven-Year-Old Is Axed’, *Mail Online*, 3 December 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-5141601/index.html>.

<sup>181</sup> Frances Perraudin and Imogen Cooper, ‘Ian Brady Had Locked Cases of His Belongings Removed before Death’, *The Guardian*, 21 September 2017, sec. UK news, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/21/moors-murderer-ian-brady-died-of-natural-causes-coroner-rules>.

<sup>182</sup> Peter Stanford, ‘A New Mind Game by Ian Brady’, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 June 2013, sec. News, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/10139130/A-new-mind-game-by-ian-brady.html>; Pat Hurst and Abigail O’Leary, ‘Brady’s Prison Life Revealed as Killer Was “Abused

press, in particular, would likely have assigned the descriptor 'paedophile' to him more regularly. So too would the crimes be represented as cases of 'child sexual abuse', 'child sexual exploitation' and 'child sexual murder'. Inevitably, this raises questions as to whether or not Brady actually was a paedophile, or was instead motivated by violence and domination. This study is, however, concerned with what was produced and represented in response to Brady, rather than with making those kinds of classifications.

What are recent portrayals of Brady doing? Some articles, at first glance, seem to be in a representational time warp, using tropes familiar to initial reporting on the case from the 1960s: darkness, evil, inhumanity. Media inclinations to linguistically 'other' Brady and Hindley seem not to have diminished in the intervening 50 years, in spite of apparent changes in medical, legal and cultural understandings of child sexual abusers and murderers that were explored in the previous chapter – and which also appear within the handful of recent articles that speak of Ian Brady with reference to 'paedophilia'. Representation is a complex and often inexact process. Media groups paint pictures of sexual crime by drawing from a palette of current trends, social and moral concerns, familiarity, and cultural memory. Analysing the ways in which certain narratives endure and others shift, we evince the ambiguous, subjective, and anachronistic workings of representations of sexual violence against children. Even though wording changes – as I show in the following chapters – certain rhetorical frames of reference remain. The next case study will consider how ways of speaking began to shift in the 1970s and 1980s through a mixture of liberalising activism, and attempts by pro-paedophile groups to try to replicate other minorities' successes. During that period, use of the terms 'paedophile', 'paedophilia' and 'child sexual abuse' began to proliferate in the popular British media.

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Daily and Scared of Attacks", *Daily Mirror*, 16 May 2017, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/ian-bradys-pathetic-life-behind-10430665>.



## Chapter Three

### Paedophilia Unbound: The PIE Moment, 1974-81

#### Prologue

The Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) was an activist member organisation in the UK that existed between 1974 and 1984. PIE's main aims were to:

- Define, explain and promote paedophilia (sexual attraction to children) through its own publications (such as its official journal, *Magpie*), appearances at public events, connections to radical academia, and through the mainstream media.
- Provide a support and correspondence network for those who identified as paedophiles, particularly through the use of membership publications and 'contact advertisements'.
- Abolish the age of consent in the UK through lobbying of government and activist groups.

Founded in Scotland in October 1974 by student Michael Hansen, the group's first chairman, PIE moved to London the following year. The most influential members of PIE were Keith Hose (chairman from 1975), Tom O'Carroll (treasurer, chairman and prominent member who tended to be the public face of the organisation) and Steven Adrian Smith (chairman from 1979 until 1984). PIE received high levels of media and police attention due to its controversial activities. In 1978 this crystallised into an official police investigation that led to the prosecutions of several members for promoting sexual acts against children. The investigation focused on the group's advertisements in its publications, rather than on specific instances of child sexual abuse, because evidence of the latter was seemingly difficult to find and prosecute. When the *de facto* leader of the group, O'Carroll, was sentenced to prison in 1981 for conspiring to corrupt public morals, PIE effectively folded. This was made official in a notification in its journal in the summer of 1984. Prosecutors meanwhile continued to press charges against remaining members. A postscript to the PIE story came in 2013, when supposed support given to PIE by the National Council for Civil Liberties

(NCCL; now Liberty) was made public in the popular media. This has reanimated the PIE case within a wider discourse of alleged state knowledge – and in some cases alleged support – of historic abuse against children.

## Introduction

In a 1976 volume of *Understanding Paedophilia*, the official journal of PIE, a full-page advertisement promoted a new book about a male child actor who had gained national attention for his performance in a hit film of the 1960s. *Understanding Paedophilia* informed its readers that the biography was 'certain to achieve a healthy degree of orgasmic reaction among [the child actor's] fans'.<sup>1</sup> In a later volume from 1977, a picture of a naked young boy in a suggestive pose was reproduced, originally having been published in *Male International*.<sup>2</sup> Such 'promotions' were common throughout PIE's publication history.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, several of PIE's leading members were prosecuted under conspiracy laws for activities including the publishing of such 'contact' advertisements that promoted sexual acts between adults and children.<sup>4</sup> The police, from 1978 onwards, sought to build a case against PIE members (including former chairman O'Carroll) based on evidence of actual child sexual abuse, but none was found.<sup>5</sup> The PIE records make for a challenging research experience for many reasons, including the distressing nature of the subject matter. Another is the apparent discrepancy between what PIE claimed as their organisational intentions – and indeed the types of articles and opinion pieces that constituted the other pages of their journals – and the prosecutions that led to the group's ultimate downfall. Officially, PIE decried all dissemination of indecent material. One of the opening statements from the first edition of *Maggie*, the PIE journal

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<sup>1</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, '[Name Redacted]', *Understanding Paedophilia* 1, no. 2 (1976): 6.

<sup>2</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, 'Advertisement', *Understanding Paedophilia* 1, no. 4 (1977): 5.

<sup>3</sup> For ethical reasons I do not reproduce any of them here.

<sup>4</sup> Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain: How the Personal Got Political* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 135; Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (OUP Oxford, 2013), 177; Tim Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation* (London: Methuen, 1990), 135.

<sup>5</sup> Gay Noise Collective, 'The Paedophile Information Exchange Trial', *Gay Noise*, 12 December 1981; Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 133–36.

that replaced *Understanding Paedophilia*, was that ‘*Magpie* does not promote or otherwise encourage unlawful acts, sexual or otherwise’.<sup>6</sup> As historian Lucy Robinson has pointed out, ‘PIE’s defence at the trial rested on the argument that their function was to campaign for the recognition of the feelings of paedophiles and that this was not the same as sanctioning sex with children’.<sup>7</sup> Although their position was not dismissed in court altogether, O’Carroll’s conviction marked the *de facto* end of PIE as a functioning organisation.<sup>8</sup>

Tim Tate, an investigative journalist who has written about child pornography in the UK, has claimed that PIE membership peaked at 250.<sup>9</sup> Robinson claims that this number was closer to 450, but that PIE was ‘effectively over’ by 1979.<sup>10</sup> This chapter will explore how such an apparently small-scale and short-lived operation managed to create a storm that, I argue, was both shaped by and then shifted the boundaries of the postwar conversation about child sexual abuse in the UK. Following this introduction the chapter is split into two major sections, dealing firstly with a contextual exploration of the historical factors that enabled PIE to emerge, and secondly with popular representations of PIE. I do first tell a brief history of the organisation that draws on current historiography and contemporary press coverage. Placing PIE within a multivalent historical context, I then show how the organisation’s emergence was part of a wider process in which the extent of child sexual abuse was being ‘discovered’ and spoken about by progressive feminist campaigners and academics.<sup>11</sup> In this fast-changing space of personal politics and morality, PIE purported to challenge the last taboo of libertarianism by arguing that a child was fully capable of determining his or her own sexual autonomy.<sup>12</sup> I will show that it was not only PIE members who were testing such notions – although they were the most trenchant and controversial in their views. This point is borne out when we look at the individuals and organisations

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<sup>6</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, ‘*Magpie*’, *Magpie: Journal of the Paedophile Information Exchange*, no. 1 (March 1977): 1.

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 135.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Man Jailed For Conspiring to Corrupt Morals’, *The Times*, 14 March 1981.

<sup>9</sup> Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation*, 128.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 131.

<sup>11</sup> Jenny Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse: Media Influence and Public Understanding of Sexual Violence Against Children* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>12</sup> Keith Hose, ‘The PIE Manifesto’ (Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE), November 1975), 2.

that gave PIE a voice and platform, either at conferences and debates, or in PIE's own written publications.<sup>13</sup> I argue that despite media outcry (both then and more recently), PIE was not an anomaly but a product of its time, exploiting an atmosphere in which myriad libertarian movements were burgeoning. PIE utilised contemporary methods to further its arguments, and amidst that increasingly open cultural, intellectual and sexual discourse, was able to gain a degree of traction amongst rights campaigners and political groups. The countercultural movement, a shift in discussions around morality, the feminist second wave movement, the gay rights movement, paedophile communities both in the UK and internationally, and longer intellectual considerations of child sexuality were all referenced in these debates, and I explore these here. To a current-day observer, it may seem shocking that PIE was able to secure any kind of public platform. But in the mid-1970s, there were limited established terminological frameworks for the direct understanding of child sexual abuse or paedophilia. This came through in nascent stages later in the decade.

I deal with these developments in the second major part of this chapter. In terms of parlance, here I often refer to 'paedophilia' or 'adult sexual attraction to children', as well as 'child sexual abuse'. This is because the PIE affair marks a historical moment in which a variety of groups grappled with the concept of acceptability of adult sex with children. The episode was the subject of intense, often angry media attention, leaving a strong source base from which to piece together further major elements of a linguistic framework. In doing so, I continue the thread of exploring how conceptions of adult sex with children have been represented. I document and analyse PIE's own output, as well as popular media and political representations that reveal profound shifts in the ways that adult sexual attraction to children was discussed and categorised in the 1970s. The most eye-catching changes came through mainstream use of the words 'paedophile' and 'paedophilia', and I argue here that such developments were a direct result of the PIE case. This linguistic moment occurred amidst a

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<sup>13</sup> The National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL, now Liberty) gave a platform to PIE in the late 1970s, something that has been cited frequently in recent discussions. The Gay Left Collective published pieces by Tom O'Carroll in their journal *Gay Left* and opened up debate on whether paedophilia could ever be acceptable. The Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) also showed solidarity in the early years. These associations are explored more fully later in the chapter.

wider germination of direct expression and language to describe matters pertaining to adult sex with children.

### **A Brief History of PIE**

PIE sought to define and explain paedophilia to its audiences – be it the individual members who had subscribed to PIE’s journals, or wider audiences in academia or campaign groups whose attention had been caught.<sup>14</sup> They were historically significant definitions. Until PIE appropriated the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ with both its own group name and these publications, there were very few instances of the terms’ common usage or definition in the United Kingdom in the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Paedophilia, an early PIE publication stated, was ‘sexual love directed towards children’, generally aged between 8 and 15. The paedophile, the group argued, had no choice in such desires.<sup>16</sup> What is apparent is PIE’s attempt to distinguish *paedophilia* from *abuse*, and with considerable care under the terms of their manifesto: ‘paedophilia’, so PIE claimed, was a loving and ‘tender’ sexual condition which should not bring persecution or social rejection; ‘abuse’, they said, was something that should still be punishable by law.<sup>17</sup> The PIE Manifesto claimed that there was no evidence that paedophilia was a harmful condition for children.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the document makes the claim that ‘far from there being evidence of harm caused by mutually desired relationships of this kind, research points in the opposite direction ... [C]hildren experience sexual feelings and have and enjoy sexual relationships with other children and with adults’.<sup>19</sup> These claims are repeated

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<sup>14</sup> Christian Wolmar, ‘The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s’, *The Independent*, 27 February 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/looking-back-to-the-great-british-paedophile-infiltration-campaign-of-the-1970s-9155610.html>.

<sup>15</sup> There were very few popular press references to ‘paedophilia’ until 1975, when the *Sunday People* launched an exposé on the Paedophile Action for Liberation (PAL) and later two major broadsheets (*The Times* and *The Guardian*) covered PIE’s joint publication of a leaflet with the Albany Trust, a group promoting psychosexual health.

<sup>16</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, ‘Paedophilia: Some Questions and Answers’ (Paedophile Information Exchange, 1978); Hose, ‘The PIE Manifesto’; Keith Hose, ‘Out into the Open’, *Understanding Paedophilia* 1, no. 4 (1977): 4.

<sup>17</sup> See Keith R. Hose and M.J. Burbidge, ‘Evidence On The Law Relating To And Penalties For Certain Sexual Offences Involving Children: For The Home Office Criminal Law Revision Committee’ (Paedophile Information Exchange, November 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Hose, ‘The PIE Manifesto’, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Hose, 12.

throughout PIE publications, accompanied by (largely international) research, and are also made in O'Carroll's 1980 book *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.<sup>20</sup> The upshot, PIE claimed, was that children should be capable of making their own sexual decisions and consenting to relationships with adults.

In addition to defining paedophilia, PIE wished to provide a support mechanism for paedophiles who were confused about their feelings, or facing legal cases for their actions, or both.<sup>21</sup> As Hose writes in the Manifesto, 'paedophiles are a category especially subject to verbal and physical abuse by the arresting police, prison warders and other prisoners'.<sup>22</sup> PIE would therefore provide such individuals with solidarity.<sup>23</sup> PIE was also a forum for paedophiles to exchange information, as the name suggested. In the words of the Manifesto, PIE 'provides the means for [paedophiles] to feel less isolated and gain a sense of community. Other important functions of PIE are to provide a forum for the public debate of paedophilia and the sexuality of children.'<sup>24</sup> The consistent use of the term 'paedophile' as a means of assigning identity to PIE members marked the first time that any group in the UK had consistently and publicly defined either themselves or others as such, although PIE members of course made up only a negligible fraction of the nation's paedophiles or of child sexual abusers. Today we recognise the hostile treatment of child sexual abusers in prisons as axiomatic, given increasingly robust structures that oppose abuse, and high-profile examples in the media. In the end, it was the 'information exchange' that came to be viewed as something far more insidious than Hose's *prima facie* statements suggested, namely in being a forum for paedophiles to

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<sup>20</sup> 'Paedophilia' and 'child sexual abuse' have continued to be heavily confused since, largely because of widespread public rejection of the notion of 'paedophilia' as a 'loving' condition. See contextual chapter for analysis of this conflation. For PIE's stated distinction between 'paedophilia' and 'abuse' see Hose, 'Out into the Open'; Tom O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case* (London: Peter Owen, 1980), <https://www.ipce.info/host/radicase/>.

<sup>21</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, 'Paedophilia: Some Questions and Answers', Q32.

<sup>22</sup> See, for one example, Jeremy Armstrong, 'Paedophile Mitchell Harrison Disembowelled in Frankland Prison Killing', *Daily Mirror*, 3 October 2011, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/paedophile-mitchell-harrison-disembowelled-frankland-82885>. That Hose referenced prison conditions suggests that 'paedophiles' had for some time been treated with disdain when in custody, although no evidence existed for terms such as 'paedo' and 'nonce'. Additionally, Hose may have *described* such incarcerated individuals as paedophiles, but not all child sexual abusers are paedophiles (and vice versa).

<sup>23</sup> Hose, 'The PIE Manifesto', 1.

<sup>24</sup> Hose, 2.

procure child pornography and, allegedly, connect members with parents who were prepared to encourage their own children into an adult sexual relationship.<sup>25</sup>

PIE's other major stated aim, and the one that came to attract the most external attention, was to abolish the age of consent:

We propose that the law should no longer define ages below which consent to sexual activity cannot be given, and that the criminal law should be concerned only with those sexual activities which:

- a) are not consented to; or
- b) result in clinically demonstrable mental or physical harm or suffering; or
- c) have given rise to reasonable complaints from a member of the public; or
- d) involve the use of intimidation, drugs, alcohol etc. to secure the seduction or procurement of children or young persons.
- e) continue after prohibition by the administrators of the Children's Acts.<sup>26</sup>

Immediate reaction to these proposals in the media and in academia tended to centre on the definition of consent. Opponents claimed that a child by definition was incapable of consent, as it had not developed its full faculties. In a 1978 piece, for instance, the Gay Left Collective challenged PIE's attachment of 'childhood sexuality to the experiences of adult sexuality, an equation that cannot be made as children cannot be read back as small adults'.<sup>27</sup> PIE claimed, through the frame of child sexual liberation, that children were in fact capable of sexual autonomy. As such, it argued, the legal age of consent (which had been sixteen for heterosexual sex since 1885's Criminal Law Amendment bill, and 21 for homosexual sex since 1967) was invalid and unnecessary.<sup>28</sup> The age of

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<sup>25</sup> Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation*, 133, 135.

<sup>26</sup> Hose, 'The PIE Manifesto', 13.

<sup>27</sup> The Gay Left Collective, 'Happy Families? Paedophilia Examined', *Gay Left: A Gay Socialist Journal* 7 (Winter 1978/79): 2-5.

<sup>28</sup> See Paedophile Information Exchange, 'Paedophilia: Some Questions and Answers', Q27, which claims that as a child is capable of showing 'reluctance' towards sexual encounters, they must be able to distinguish between wanted and unwanted relationships.

consent was indeed challenged elsewhere, as increasing teenage sexual activity attracted concern from groups such as the British Medical Association.<sup>29</sup>

Cutting through PIE's stated mission left the suspicion that this was really about something else: clearing a legislative pathway for adults who were sexually attracted to children to carry out unfettered abuse, and at the same time to encourage child pornography through the 'contact advertisement' pages. Ultimately, the 1978 Protection of Children Act legislated against 'indecent' child images. Here are some examples of the PIE advertisements:

- No. 273 Energetic middle-aged male sincere and discreet lks boys 8-15 yrs and the various ways in which they dress. Int swimming. Wld lk to hear from others with similar ints;
- No. 390 Male. Interested public school type boys, 12-16, either in football shorts or corduroy trousers, wd like to meet young male, 20-30, with similar interests. (S W London/Surrey);
- No. 379 Male Int girls 6-13 wd lk to correspond/meet others with similar interests; music, sports, fashion, Hi-Fi, photography, dance, reading, films. (Blackpool);
- No. 373 Doctor, male. Poet and author, interested photos little girls in white pants and little boys out of white pants. Wd like to hear from male or female with similar interests. All letters answered. Perfect discretion. (Reading, Berks);
- No. 401 Anglican priest, south London, anxious to meet other paedcs for friendship and help.<sup>30</sup>

This content causes consternation, particularly the very specific, fetishised visions of children, their activities (sport-related descriptions feature heavily), and their clothing. Each entry seeks out individuals with 'similar interests', seemingly an indirect or coded way of soliciting children or child pornography – or perhaps reflecting a desire to 'play-act'. Also notable are the characteristics of those who have placed the advertisements: all male, of conventional professions

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<sup>29</sup> By the mid-1970s sexual activity was up to 26% and 12% in fifteen-year-old boys and girls respectively, from 6% and 2% in the mid-1960s: Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 170.

<sup>30</sup> Reproduced from PIE journals in O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.



and backgrounds (middle-aged, doctor, clergy).<sup>31</sup> Indeed, a survey of 77 PIE members published in 1983 found that they were 'over-represented at professional levels' and that 'there is an indication ... that paedophiles gravitate towards jobs that bring them into contact with children'.<sup>32</sup> The survey found that members were most likely to be attracted to girls aged between eight and eleven, and boys aged between eleven and fifteen, with the majority (70%) indicating a preference in boys.<sup>33</sup> This statistic is unsurprising, as PIE very consciously drew on the longer, venerated tradition of 'boy love', from the Greeks to the Uranian poets – something O'Carroll himself (despite being a 'boy-lover') challenged: 'some boy-lovers write as though girls did not exist'.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of operating methods, PIE attached itself to the gay rights movement, and was a forum that sought to protect the rights of men who were attracted to boys. The courts agreed with widespread suspicions that these advertisements had sinister ulterior movements when several PIE members went on trial in the early 1980s, leading to the prosecution and imprisonment of O'Carroll and others for corrupting public morals. Content-wise, PIE operated by sending out regular publications (*Understanding Paedophilia* and *Magpie*) and manifestos to its members and subscribers with content from members, supplemented by supposed expert academic and forensic opinion.<sup>35</sup> PIE also instigated debate within radical and academic movements, appearing at conferences and engaging with gay rights groups such as the Gay Left Collective.<sup>36</sup> That group published articles in its journal by O'Carroll alongside

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<sup>31</sup> Research has shown that the vast majority of both paedophiles and those who carry out child sexual abuse are male. See contextual chapter, 'What is Paedophilia?'

<sup>32</sup> Glenn D. Wilson and David N. Cox, 'Personality of Paedophile Club Members', *Personality and Individual Differences* 4, no. 3 (1983): 324.

<sup>33</sup> See research by Wilson and Cox, 'Personality of Paedophile Club Members'; Glenn Daniel Wilson and David N. Cox, *The Child-Lovers: A Study of Paedophiles in Society* (Peter Owen, 1983).

<sup>34</sup> O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*, Preface.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Edward Brongersma, 'Love in Education: The Unapproachable Risk', *Understanding Paedophilia*, 1976; Douglas Sarff, 'Sex Begins At A Very Early Age: The Work and Theories of the Guyon Society', *Understanding Paedophilia*, 1976; Frits Bernard, 'The Phenomenon of Paedophilia', *Understanding Paedophilia*, 1977, and references to Alfred Kinsey in PIE journals.

<sup>36</sup> O'Carroll controversially appeared, and then had a piece included in the follow-up publication, at a 'Love and Attraction' conference in Swansea, 1977: Tom O'Carroll, 'Images of Pedophilia', in *Love and Attraction: An International Conference*, ed. Mark Cook and Glenn Wilson (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013), 511–17; In the early 1980s Wilson and Cox released an article and book collection survey which portrayed PIE members somewhat sympathetically: Glenn D. Wilson and David N. Cox, 'Personality of Paedophile Club Members', *Personality and Individual*

relatively sympathetic considerations from members.<sup>37</sup> PIE aligned itself with the NCCL which, following its 1978 AGM, released a statement that supported PIE's right to free expression and condemned 'physical and other attacks on those who have discussed or attempted to discuss paedophilia'.<sup>38</sup> Later, when prosecutions against PIE members were underway, the BBC conducted an interview with PIE chairman Steven Adrian Smith where he restated his, and PIE's, belief that children were capable of sexual consent – and that 'paedophiles do not exploit children'.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, high-profile political and media groups had allowed PIE members a platform for their views. This is something that current-day observers have found difficult to comprehend, with a BBC article in 2014 claiming that 'it's hard now to believe the group existed for more than a decade'.<sup>40</sup> The next section reconstructs some of the major cultural, intellectual and specific contexts to challenge such disbelief.

### **Why did PIE Emerge?: Cultural Contexts**

It seems tempting to explain away PIE's presence by holding up the naivety and lack of knowledge of those that were sympathetic to the arguments of Hose, O'Carroll and others. However, this would be to dismiss the emerging intellectual context and discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. As my discussion of the Moors murders showed, it was not the case that adult sex with children was not known or talked about, but rather that the ways in which that knowledge was navigated and spoken about took different, often indirect forms. Indeed, PIE was itself one of the primary drivers for change in this particular discursive area. The group's self-referential use of the term 'paedophile' furthered direct linguistic expression and categorisation and, along with responses to it, began

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*Differences* 4, no. 3 (1983): 323–329; Glenn Daniel Wilson and David N. Cox, *The Child-Lovers: A Study of Paedophiles in Society* (Peter Owen, 1983).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, The Gay Left Collective, 'Happy Families? Paedophilia Examined'; Tom O'Carroll, 'Paedophilia: A Response', *Gay Left: A Gay Socialist Journal* 8 (Summer 1979): 13–17; Jamie Gough, 'Childhood Sexuality & Paedophilia', *Gay Left: A Gay Socialist Journal* 8 (Summer 1979): 18–19.

<sup>38</sup> Paedophile Information Exchange, 'NCCL Supports PIE's Rights', *Magpie - The Journal of the Paedophile Information Exchange*, no. 11 (May 1978).

<sup>39</sup> 'PIE (Paedophile Information Exchange) Interview', *Newsnight* (BBC, 1983), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM\\_se7pb8t8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM_se7pb8t8).

<sup>40</sup> Tom de Castella and Tom Heyden, 'How Did the Pro-Paedophile Group PIE Exist Openly for 10 Years?', *BBC News*, 27 February 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26352378>.

to give shape to 'paedophilia' as a prominent representational notion for the first time in Britain. In the media representations of the time, there is a sense that when people spoke about paedophiles, they were more often than not speaking directly about PIE members. The two were inextricably connected because it was PIE that had most visibly introduced the terminology. In terms of method, too, far from attempting to operate outside the bounds of sexual knowledge, PIE positioned its causes on intellectually progressive grounds, partnered with public activist groups and academics, and appeared in popular media channels. PIE members claimed to be raising the bar of liberal sexual debates, rather than lowering the tone. Gabrielle Shaw, of the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC), has stated that PIE 'took advantage of the trends of the time ... in the mid-70s it was all about the fight for civil liberties and the trend towards sexual freedom'.<sup>41</sup> Underpinning the PIE movement was a confluence of sexual and personal politics, radical thought and libertarian ideals. Here I draw out direct connections between these forces and PIE's actions to show that PIE's successes and methods were not anomalous to its era. Indeed, I also argue that it was some of these same contextual factors that brought about PIE's expiration as enabled its rise.

In 1974, at the time of PIE's emergence, broad cultural shifts had been influencing personal and political dynamics in Britain for around a decade. Much has been written about the impact of pop music on the sexual culture of the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> Television, cinema and visual culture changed gradually due to an easing of censorship in the wake of the *Lady Chatterley* trial. British films of the 1970s displayed the 'instability of gender identity, class distinctions and shift in national identity' that defined the era.<sup>43</sup> The contraceptive pill was initially made available to married women only in 1961, and then to all in 1966. The pill,

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<sup>41</sup> 'Douglas Slade and the Paedophile Information Exchange', *BBC News*, 1 July 2016, sec. Bristol, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-36602256>.

<sup>42</sup> See for example Elizabeth Nelson, *British Counter-Culture 1966-73: A Study Of The Underground Press* (London: Springer, 1989); Brian Longhurst, *Popular Music and Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); Sheila Whiteley, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity* (London: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> S. Barber, *The British Film Industry in the 1970s: Capital, Culture and Creativity* (London: Springer, 2013); Sue Harper and Justin Smith, *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Garry Whannel, 'Boxed In: Television in the 1970s', in *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure*, ed. Bart Moore-Gilbert (London: Routledge, 2013); Paul Newland, *British Films of the 1970s* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

according to historian of medicine Lara Marks, had ‘a profound influence on attitudes towards sex and contraception’, being novel in separating contraception from the act of sex itself, and enabling women to use contraception without the knowledge of their male partners – although its impact as a catalyst for sexual revolution is perhaps overstated.<sup>44</sup> The Abortion Act of 1967 also furthered women’s rights to sexual self-determination. In the same year, homosexuality was partially decriminalised. These legislative changes added substance to fresh perceptions of sexual identity – the Swinging Sixties, Woodstock and the Summer of Love – in which perceived sexual barriers had fallen away. Later, advances made by the Women’s Liberation Movement were further realised in legal terms when the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act (1976) were passed. Gert Hekma and Alain Giami, editors of an interdisciplinary collection (2014) on sexual revolution, have cited the pill, the miniskirt, pop music and festivals, gay rights campaigning, student revolts, attacks on the nuclear family and an increasingly sexualised media as evidence of changes to sexual life.<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless, scholars have challenged the true reach of this so-called revolution. Matt Cook questions the significance of the periodisation of 1965-1970, pointing to a ‘more attenuated, uneven and partial process and ... a longer period than the five or six years commonly ascribed to Britain’s sexual revolution’.<sup>46</sup> Cook has argued that the ‘sexual revolution’, to use that term, was not universal: ‘though many people grasped the idea of taking pleasure in sex for its own sake, that idea in itself might not have been liberating’.<sup>47</sup> Some representations – those announcing a fully liberated sexual moment – were more prominent than less alluring conclusions that revealed sexual conservatism. For all that the period is often considered to represent ‘radical

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<sup>44</sup> Lara Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (Yale University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>45</sup> Gert Hekma and Alain Giami, eds., ‘Sexual Revolutions: An Introduction’, in *Sexual Revolutions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Matt Cook, ‘Sexual Revolution(s) in Britain’, in *Sexual Revolutions*, ed. Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 122.

<sup>47</sup> Cook, 122.

change at the social level', there is other evidence that tells different stories.<sup>48</sup> Not everyone could – or wanted to – identify with the so-called advances in sexual outlooks. British cinema interests reveal this ambiguity; viewers' tastes were 'fragmented' and whilst there was a preference for 'radical sexual politics' in film in the early 1970s, this had become more conservative by the mid-1970s.<sup>49</sup> For many in 1970s Britain, external changes made little impact on their everyday sexual realities and identities, either in that moment or in the future. Interview research carried out by sociologist Michael Schofield in the late 1960s revealed, for instance, British teenagers far less sexually active than a supposedly corresponding pool from the United States interviewed by Alfred Kinsey in the 1950s.<sup>50</sup> And whilst the pill and free love are often thought to have prolonged sexual single life, the popularity of marriage continued to rise in both actual and incidental terms up to a peak in 1972, when 426,241 marriages occurred in England and Wales. It was from the late 1970s and early 1980s that marriage figures began to decline, to a low of 232,443 by 2009.<sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Weeks has argued that what is most striking about the permissive society was not promiscuity or adventure, but conformity; 'most adolescents differed little in their social attitudes from their elders'.<sup>52</sup>

The pull and push of sexual forces in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s reveals not simply a dichotomous (permissive versus patrician) context, but a highly ambiguous space that both created and 'housed' PIE. Given that the 'themes of freedom and pleasure ... were central to the political struggles of the era', as English scholar David Wilkinson has claimed, it is little surprise that PIE members were able to gain a public voice in such an atmosphere, or that there were willing facilitators amongst members of the Left.<sup>53</sup> PIE operated from an

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<sup>48</sup> Laurel Forster and Sue Harper, eds., *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 8.

<sup>49</sup> Harper and Smith, *British Film Culture in the 1970s*, 225.

<sup>50</sup> Julia O'Connell Davidson and Derek Layder, *Methods, Sex, and Madness* (London: Psychology Press, 1994), 105.

<sup>51</sup> Office for National Statistics, 'Number of Marriages, Marriage Rates and Period of Occurrence', 2011, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/numberofmarriagesmarriageratesandperiodofoccurrence>.

<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, Second Edition, Themes in British Social History (New York: Longman, 1997), 253.

<sup>53</sup> David Wilkinson, *Post-Punk, Politics and Pleasure in Britain* (London: Springer, 2016), 3.

anti-establishment, supposedly anti-hypocritical position that was attractive to others who sought to further the cause of liberation. The countercultural left noted and engaged with radical groups vocally opposed to the established political and sexual order. In this sphere, autonomy – sexual and otherwise – was central. PIE argued for absolute sexual autonomy – both for the paedophiles who had until that point, they argued, been denied their sexual rights due to the law and cultural taboo, and for the children whom PIE asserted should be able to determine their own sexual boundaries and instigate their own relationships. Such arguments were set against a wider dialogue about children’s rights that was aired, for example, in the free school movement. This sought to create educational spaces free of ‘state control’ in which children could ‘think, feel, dream, and engage in interactions according to their own authentic needs and passions’.<sup>54</sup> Engagement with moral relativism empowered individuals to think that their own choices about sex were the right ones, regardless of legal or cultural tradition.<sup>55</sup> As David Paternotte puts it, ‘both the content and the forms of [the PIE] debates and arguments were undoubtedly influenced by the spirit and the rhetoric of (homo)sexual liberation’.<sup>56</sup> PIE succeeded in getting its audiences, particularly those on the Left, to think about the difference between child sexual abuse and consensual sex between adult and child, argues Robinson, because of the Left’s mores of the time: ‘it was fashionable to see children as autonomous beings who should have the right to liberate themselves sexually’.<sup>57</sup>

A moral and sexual universe of ideas was encapsulated in the PIE controversy. Sexuality was an integral part of so-called ‘countercultural’ change in the 1960s and 1970s, representing for some a revolution within a revolution.<sup>58</sup> The term ‘counterculture’ was popularised by the US historian Theo Roszak, who questioned the established ‘technocracy’ of elite politics and

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<sup>54</sup> Ron Miller, *Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy after the 1960s* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>55</sup> See for example Gilbert Harman, ‘Moral Relativism Defended’, *The Philosophical Review* 84, no. 1 (1975): 3–22.

<sup>56</sup> David Paternotte, ‘Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism’, in *Sexual Revolutions*, ed. Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 264.

<sup>57</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 131.

<sup>58</sup> See, for an exploration of sexual changes following 1968, Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, eds., *Gender and Sexuality in 1968: Transformative Politics in the Cultural Imagination* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

corporate industry in the wake of seminal world events such as the Vietnam War, or global protests of 1968, and people's reactions to them.<sup>59</sup> As I shall explore later in this chapter, scholars have pinpointed the 1970s as a time of increasing inclusivity in Western countries, in part due to advances following the civil rights movement in the United States, and social changes sparked by events in 1968.<sup>60</sup> On a broader intellectual level, postmodernism, moral relativism and contradiction were put into battle against 'grand narratives' and the idea that truth could be objective. Instead, proponents argued that truth was locally prescribed and subjective.<sup>61</sup> Although 'liberation' was becoming a large part of the political, economic and cultural discourse, reactionary elements were equally attempting to stem that tide. Detractors of the counterculture, particularly those with a conservative bent, critically defined the era in terms of its apparent drive towards an individualistic, consumerist culture that lacked the communal, familial stitching of the 1950s.<sup>62</sup> However, this has been seen as a limited reading of a movement that was not only cultural but deeply political, too; see the increasing rejection of government, and protest action across the globe on issues including war, civil rights, gender roles and gay rights.<sup>63</sup> Further, the counterculture was not confined to a limited period, and it 'didn't come out of nowhere: it appeared gradually as a ripening of popular discontent'.<sup>64</sup> The counterculture was 'pervasive, politicised, and diffuse'.<sup>65</sup>

The reason I raise the countercultural movement here is not to construct a definition of it, but to point out its impact in PIE-era Britain. Whilst the

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<sup>59</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> See for analysis George N. Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (South End Press, 1987); Carole Fink et al., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); William L. O'Neill, *Dawning of the Counter-Culture: The 1960s* (Now and Then Reader LLC, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> See for instance Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1979); Wilfred Carr, 'Education and Democracy: Confronting the Postmodern Challenge', *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 29, no. 1 (1995): 75–91.

<sup>62</sup> See for a discussion of this Marilyn B. Young, 'Foreword', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (London: Routledge, 2013), 1–5.

<sup>63</sup> Young, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., 'Introduction: Historicizing the American Counterculture of 1960s and '70s', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's* (London: Routledge, 2013), 11.

<sup>65</sup> Scott MacFarlane, *The Hippie Narrative: A Literary Perspective on the Counterculture* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2007), 14.

transfer of ideas from outside, particularly the US, was real and significant, ‘an atmosphere of unease at home’ in Britain also set a clear path for countercultural ideas to flourish.<sup>66</sup> This was in part down to a lack of clarity as to Britain’s diminished role in a post-colonial world. In this space of uncertainty, liberal and conservative groups attempted to lobby and effect change in many social areas. Historian Andy Beckett has said that ‘something profound and unsettling did happen to Britain in the seventies’, but this meant different things to different people.<sup>67</sup> For many, ‘the time was dominated not by Heath and Thatcher and Callaghan but by the rise of environmentalism, or feminism, or the Gay Liberation Front, or Rock Against Racism, and other new forms of politics with their own rhythms and preoccupations’.<sup>68</sup> Beckett concludes that ‘conflicts between interests and ideologies were out in the open’ in a way that is perhaps unfamiliar even to twenty-first-century observers.<sup>69</sup> Everyone had the right to speak. Canon Angela Tilby recently reflected to the BBC that ‘in this free-for-all anything and everything was open for discussion’.<sup>70</sup> PIE emerged amidst this huge number of competing open discourses which have been summed up as follows by gay activist Richard McCance: “we were all sorts – gay, paedophile, straight, press people, academics, coming to listen to what PIE had to say”.<sup>71</sup>

### **A Paedophile Tradition?**

The kinds of arguments put forward by PIE matched to several prevailing cultural currents, but there was also a longer intellectual tradition of discussing inter-generational sexual relations and child sexuality, of which PIE members were clearly cognisant. Artistic thinkers who had represented adult-child sex in their work included Thomas Mann (*Death in Venice*, 1912), Vladimir Nabokov (*Lolita*, 1955), and Benjamin Britten (*Death in Venice*, opera, 1973).<sup>72</sup> The publication of *Lolita* caused a large literary controversy in Britain between 1955

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<sup>66</sup> Nelson, *British Counter-Culture 1966-73*, 39.

<sup>67</sup> Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber & Faber, 2009), 4.

<sup>68</sup> Beckett, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Beckett, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Castella and Heyden, ‘How Did the Pro-Paedophile Group PIE Exist Openly for 10 Years?’

<sup>71</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 131.

<sup>72</sup> Paternotte, ‘Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism’, 267.



and 1959 that involved the Home Office, and was part of the context of censorship and pornography debates that led to 1959's *Obscene Publications Act*.<sup>73</sup> In other disciplines, too, child sexuality had been explored in some detail. The psychoanalyst and theorist Wilhelm Reich had been writing since at least the 1920s about the genital rights of children, how children needed to be emancipated from sexual repression, and the place in sexual morality discussions of the incest taboo. A reading of his work suggests that sexual repression was a way of securing existing social class structures.<sup>74</sup> Herbert Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, using a Marxist-Freudian reading of capitalist culture, were also intellectually influential in the postwar period.<sup>75</sup> Marcuse argued that the notion of 'perversion' – including adult sexual attraction to children – was central to moving from a sexually repressive society toward 'polymorphous sexuality'.<sup>76</sup> Freud had argued from the early twentieth century that children were sexual beings with erogenous zones.<sup>77</sup> As set out in the introductory chapters, Krafft-Ebing and other sexologists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century directly addressed the issue of adult sex with children, and it was Krafft-Ebing who crafted the term 'paedophilia'.<sup>78</sup> Paternotte says that evidence of this kind proves that 'pedophilia was not a new topic'.<sup>79</sup> Although it is true that child sexuality and adult-child sexual relations had been discussed before PIE's emergence, the discourse had been elitist and rarefied, and these topics were not widely talked about with reference to 'paedophilia' until the 1970s.<sup>80</sup>

Many well-known intellectuals across Europe controversially played on 1970s cultural themes of liberation to argue for increased child autonomy on sexual matters. These thinkers also began to use the term 'paedophile' (or

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<sup>73</sup> Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 290–95.

<sup>74</sup> See for examples Wilhelm Reich, *Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974); Wilhelm Reich, *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality* (London: Souvenir Press, 1972), 112–42.

<sup>75</sup> Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800*, 250.

<sup>76</sup> Paternotte, 'Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism', 267.

<sup>77</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Fine Books, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. Franklin S. Klaf (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998).

<sup>79</sup> Paternotte, 'Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism', 267.

<sup>80</sup> With Krafft-Ebing being a notable and obvious exception. As for the longer tradition of adult sex with children, see discussion of 'Greek Love' in the contextual introduction to this thesis.

*pédophile* if writing in French). Michel Foucault and Jean-Paul Sartre were among those who called for the decriminalisation of paedophilic acts.<sup>81</sup> René Schérer, the French philosopher, argued in the 1970s for more freedom for child sexual relations, both 'between minors *and* across generations'. He was eventually prosecuted but released.<sup>82</sup> Schérer worked closely with the theorist Guy Hocquenghem who also challenged the notion that 'inter-generational relations necessarily imply abuse'.<sup>83</sup> 'Paedophilia' (fast becoming the most common linguistic term for adult sexual attraction to children) was discussed in academic papers, conferences and books emanating from the late 1970s and later, with the focus often being on (international) changes to the age of consent – or indeed its removal altogether.<sup>84</sup> Articles by academics were featured in PIE's publications arguing for the abolition of the age of consent, and O'Carroll and Hose appeared at university conferences.<sup>85</sup> PIE members were well aware of the growing intellectual discourse on adult sex with children, and indeed made themselves an active part of it in an attempt, seemingly, to add credibility and depth to its claims.

As a matter of praxis, these intellectual trends reflected an international context in which advances were being made by paedophilic advocacy movements, with groups emerging in the United States (NAMBLA), Germany (*Die Deutsche Studien und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Pädophilie*), France (*Groupe de Recherche pour une Enfance Différente*), the Netherlands (*Vereniging Martijn, Paidika*) and Belgium as well as the UK, and PIE being part of the move to form a 'Paedophile Internationale'.<sup>86</sup> The major point in common across the international paedophile debates was that respective age of consent legislation

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<sup>81</sup> See discussion on child sexuality between Michel Foucault, Guy Hocquenghem, and Jean Danet, 'La Loi de La Pudeur', *Recherches* 37 (April 1979); Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 35.

<sup>82</sup> Paternotte, 'Pedophilia, Homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian Activism', 266.

<sup>83</sup> Paternotte, 267.

<sup>84</sup> See for written examples William Guenther Paul Kraemer, *The Forbidden Love: The Normal and Abnormal Love of Children* (Sheldon Press, 1976); René Schérer et al., 'Fous d'enfance; qui a peur des pédophiles', *Recherches* 37 (April 1979); Brian Taylor, *Perspectives on Paedophilia* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1981); Mark Cook and Kevin Howells, *Adult Sexual Interest in Children* (London: Academic Press, 1981); Wilson and Cox, 'Personality of Paedophile Club Members'; Wilson and Cox, *The Child-Lovers*.

<sup>85</sup> See for example Brongersma, 'Love in Education: The Unapproachable Risk'; O'Carroll was ejected from the 'Love and Attraction' conference at Swansea University in 1977 and other conferences in Liverpool and Oxford.

<sup>86</sup> Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation*, 139.

was seen as central to reform. Despite the debates, age of consent laws remained broadly unchanged in the 1970s both in the UK (where it was sixteen years) and internationally.<sup>87</sup> Legislation was uneven in the UK in that the age of consent for homosexual activity was higher than that for heterosexual activity. In the Netherlands, where the age of consent was uniform at sixteen years, this was not the case.<sup>88</sup> O'Carroll tells the story of a German paedophile who attended the World Sex Fair in Rotterdam in the 1970s:

He approached what he took to be the two volunteers on duty and tentatively struck up a conversation with them. They both listened sympathetically to him, and in the relaxed atmosphere he soon found himself pouring out a great many secrets about his relationships with little girls. To his surprise and pleasure neither of his newly-found confidantes seemed in the least bit shocked, or disapproving. Then one of them had to go. 'Sorry to leave,' he said, 'but I am a policeman and I have to go on duty.'<sup>89</sup>

Whilst potentially spurious, the story highlights a Dutch atmosphere supposedly open to paedophilia. O'Carroll and other PIE members constructed and used European liberalism as a means of bemoaning the negative British reaction to their arguments as somehow unprogressive or retrograded. PIE presented itself in Britain as a forward-thinking, outward-looking, enlightened group.

## **Feminism and Psychoanalysis**

The 1970s were full of invigorating intellectual ideas, amidst them a reimagining of older traditions and a 'profound reappraisal of the grand schemas of contemporary cultural, social and political theory', all of which combined to create compelling statements on sexual autonomy, the pursuit of

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<sup>87</sup> See for a thorough discussion of the international context around age of consent laws M. Waites, *The Age of Consent: Young People, Sexuality and Citizenship* (London: Springer, 2005).

<sup>88</sup> The UK was a prominent example; 1967's *Sexual Reform Act* partially decriminalised homosexual acts only for those aged 21 or over, whilst the heterosexual age of consent remained 16.

<sup>89</sup> O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

pleasure and liberation.<sup>90</sup> One significant example is the reconceptualisation of Freudian psychoanalytic thought by groups within the Women's Liberation Movement. Initially, many second-wave feminists were averse to Freudian psychoanalysis because of its inherently patriarchal, 'phallogentric' elements.<sup>91</sup> One scholar has commented that 'feminist critics were far from being pleased with (Freud's) construction of femininity'.<sup>92</sup> Florence Rush (1980) went so far as to write of a 'Freudian cover-up' of abuse against women and children, contending that Freud's theories 'allowed for the suppression and concealment of the sexual exploitation of the female child'.<sup>93</sup>

By then, some attitudes towards psychoanalysis as a discipline had softened because of the ways that it made for a meaningful space for discussions about gender and sexuality. Feminism, write historians Joy Damousi and Mariano Plotkin, 'produced the idea of gender, the cultural construction of sex ... it replaced the conflict between libido and repression with the conflict between men and women'.<sup>94</sup> This was encapsulated in Juliet Mitchell's pioneering 1974 work *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, which shocked several of Mitchell's feminist contemporaries and was rooted in Jacques Lacan's 'return to Freud'. Lacan's 'castration complex' was particularly of interest to feminist thinkers because it 'situates all subjects as either man (living under the threat of castration) or woman (already castrated)'.<sup>95</sup> As Joan Scott has put it, psychoanalysis 'posited sexual difference as an insoluble dilemma'.<sup>96</sup> Other notable feminist voices from the period working in the psychoanalytic field included Julia Kristeva, Luce

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<sup>90</sup> Anthony Elliott and Stephen Frosh, *Psychoanalysis in Context: Paths between Theory and Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

<sup>91</sup> John Fletcher, 'Gender, Sexuality, and the Theory of Seduction', in *The Academic Face of Psychoanalysis: Papers in Philosophy, the Humanities, and the British Clinical Tradition*, ed. Louise Braddock and Michael Lacewing (London: Routledge, 2013), 226.

<sup>92</sup> Tatiana Teslenko, *Feminist Utopian Novels of the 1970s: Joanna Russ and Dorothy Bryant* (London: Routledge, 2003), 43.

<sup>93</sup> Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 103.

<sup>94</sup> Joy Damousi and Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Psychoanalysis and Politics: Histories of Psychoanalysis Under Conditions of Restricted Political Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 252; Fletcher, 'Gender, Sexuality, and the Theory of Seduction'; Kirsten Campbell, 'Feminism and Lacanian Psychoanalysis', in *Jacques Lacan: Between Psychoanalysis and Politics*, ed. Samo Tomšič and Andreja Zevnik (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>95</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* (London: Basic Books, 2008), xxix.

<sup>96</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

Irigaray and Joan Copjec.<sup>97</sup> This was matched in popular fields by an increased visibility of psychoanalytic discourse, seen in the shift in women's magazines away from 'agony aunts' and towards journalism by psychological professionals.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, 'Freud's explorations of sexuality ... influenced the socio-political context in which feminist utopias of the 1970s emerged'.<sup>99</sup> These changes were also reflected in the consumption of popular culture where gender became an increasingly visible theme. British televisual examples include *George and Mildred* (1976-79), *Butterflies* (1978-83) and *Shelley* (1979-84).<sup>100</sup>

The way that feminist thinkers challenged established patriarchal hierarchies and the nature of sexual abuse towards women and children was a critical component of the sexual revolution.<sup>101</sup> Further, the dynamic between psychoanalysis and feminism helps to explain both PIE's successes and their ultimate failure. On the one hand, feminist advances closely reflected the wider liberation discourse that pushed for individual rights and freedoms. This was the environment in which PIE members sought to create ballast for themselves by propagating the sexual rights of both paedophiles and – so they claimed – children. One of PIE's primary vehicles for this message, as I will show later, was the gay rights movement, which itself shared many battlegrounds with the Women's Liberation Movement – not least the social and cultural vision of the family, which was seen as 'the starting-point of oppression' and in need of reform.<sup>102</sup> Another major subject of the activist feminist sexual revolution, particularly in psychoanalytic circles, was abuse against women and children,

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<sup>97</sup> Julia Kristeva and Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (Columbia University Press, 1986); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Cornell University Press, 1985); Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Cornell University Press, 1985); Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists* (London: Verso Books, 2015).

<sup>98</sup> Damousi and Plotkin, *Psychoanalysis and Politics*, 167.

<sup>99</sup> Teslenko, *Feminist Utopian Novels of the 1970s*, 42.

<sup>100</sup> Whannel, 'Boxed In: Television in the 1970s', 151.

<sup>101</sup> See for prominent examples of feminist texts Evelyn Reed, *The Myth of Women's Inferiority* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1969); Anne Koedt, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1970); Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (London: Random House, 1970); Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: HarperCollins, 2009); Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York: Plume, 1974); Elizabeth Gould Davis, *The First Sex* (London: Penguin Books, 1976); Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden From History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto Press, 1977); Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*.

<sup>102</sup> Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Viking, 2013), 230.

both in incidence and in origin, which was revealed to emanate predominantly from the family home. Such findings assisted in the widespread rejection of groups such as PIE by the 1980s.<sup>103</sup>

The type of paedophilia ostensibly advocated by PIE – of consensual adult-child sexual relations that were not incestuous – was shown to be far smaller in scale than familial abuse. This exposed PIE as a group of men interested only in easing legal frameworks to satisfy their own desires, rather than as a true child welfare or liberation group. British social measures, including the provision of rape crisis centres and psychological treatment of patients suffering trauma, sought to combat the perceived crisis of the ‘coming out’ of victims.<sup>104</sup> Psychoanalysis and feminism therefore stand as theoretically significant symbols of the debates around PIE. They were appropriated amongst intellectual groups as a means of discussing – and, to some, opening up – childhood sexuality and sexual liberation, but also came to be seen as revelatory *vis-à-vis* extent of abuse, as well as a practical ‘talking cure’ for many victims of abuse in the case of psychoanalysis and other psychotherapeutic treatments. It was this environment which both allowed PIE to speak, but also that was their undoing as Britain’s public became more knowledgeable about the dimensions of abuse. This duality matched the way that childhood itself was assessed and appropriated.<sup>105</sup> Whilst there were radical calls for child sexual liberation, calls for child protection came from both the feminist left and the conservative right.

## **Homosexuality and Paedophilia**

In previous chapters I explored the perceived intersection of paedophilia and homosexuality and the social concerns that this caused. In particular there were fears that homosexuals preyed on young boys and would corrupt familial ideals. In the 1970s and 1980s, this interrelation was embedded in more visible ways, particularly given PIE’s attempted alliances with several strands of the gay

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<sup>103</sup> See second introductory chapter, ‘What is Child Sexual Abuse?’

<sup>104</sup> Waites, *The Age of Consent*; Kira Cochrane, ‘Rape Crisis Is 40 – and the Need Is Greater than Ever’, the Guardian, 18 December 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/dec/18/rape-crisis-40-years-on>.

<sup>105</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 155.

rights movement.<sup>106</sup> O'Carroll noted that the paedophile movement fronted by PAL (Paedophile Action for Liberation) and PIE came directly from the Gay Liberation Front, and as such it was 'inevitable' that homosexuality and paedophilia were so strongly associated.<sup>107</sup> Culturally there was a long tradition of understanding sexual attraction to children through the lens of homosexuality. Oscar Wilde's 'love that dare not speak its name' referred to a love of boys rather than men. Sedgwick has written that 'Wilde's own eros was most closely tuned to the note of ... pederastic love'.<sup>108</sup> In PIE's era Benjamin Britten's popular opera *Death in Venice* (1973), adapted from Thomas Mann's novel, featured as its subject matter a man's unrequited lust for a boy. The law also indirectly conflated abuse of boys with homosexuality. The *Sexual Offences Act 1956* provided for crimes relating to 'intercourse with girls under sixteen' – but not with boys, suggesting that those who had sex with boys made up a different category.<sup>109</sup> When a group such as PIE therefore came into view openly declaring the link between the gay movement and paedophilia, it entrenched this association, especially given that public PIE figures such as O'Carroll were sexually interested in male children. The journalist Eileen Fairweather has commented that 'we on the Left lacked the courage to be branded "homophobic", so we just ignored it. I wish I hadn't'.<sup>110</sup> Robinson has labelled PIE's strategy 'entryism', and shows how it attempted to portray its members as suffering from a similar mire of persecution in the mid-1970s as homosexuals

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<sup>106</sup> See, for examples of scholarship which tackle this issue, Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*; Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Brian Lewis, 'Wolfenden, Paederasty and Paedophilia', *NOTCHES* (blog), 14 April 2016, <http://notchesblog.com/2016/04/14/wolfenden-paederasty-and-paedophilia/>.

<sup>107</sup> O'Carroll wrote that 'the emerging gay movement of the early 1970s presented a challenge to established sexual mores and values and a forum for radical debate, out of which it now seems inevitable that ... paedophile groups would develop. Given such a context, it is not surprising that in the groups that did emerge there were far more homosexual than heterosexual paedophiles', O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

<sup>108</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994), 57.

<sup>109</sup> 'Sexual Offences Act 1956', Text, accessed 2 August 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/4-5/69/contents>.

<sup>110</sup> Eileen Fairweather, 'We on the Left Lacked the Courage to Be Branded "Homophobic", so We Just Ignored It. I Wish I Hadn't', 21 February 2014, sec. Comment, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/10653950/We-on-the-Left-lacked-the-courage-to-be-branded-homophobic-so-we-just-ignored-it.-I-wish-I-hadnt.html>.

had experienced until changes to the *Sexual Offences Act* of 1967 partially decriminalised homosexual acts.<sup>111</sup>

## **PIE in Scholarship**

Despite the high level of press attention given to PIE between 1974 and 1981, substantive analytical works on the group and its activities are relatively few.<sup>112</sup> Historians have contributed important book chapters and articles that tackle the PIE episode from different thematic perspectives, and several scholars have at least referenced PIE in wider debates about paedophilia and child sexual abuse.<sup>113</sup> Sociologists have provided further appraisals that tend towards offering policy, regulatory or social solutions to matters of public concern such as care home abuse scandals, and point out PIE's role in these debates.<sup>114</sup> There has been a degree of consensus in these works about the conditions that led to PIE being able to gain traction in debates over adult sex with children, namely that PIE exploited the liberal rights campaigning of the period in order to gain a platform for its views, and to promote sexual activity with children. Such arguments do tend, however, toward assigning a cynical motivation to PIE's members that, as outlined in the introductory chapters, is a difficult historical concept to prove. Anthony Douglas, for instance, has stated that PIE was 'an organisation through which paedophiles communicated with each other in a relatively open way. It hitched itself to the counter-cultural movement of the late 1960s, hiding the serious and systematic abuse of children under a cloak of libertarian rhetoric'.<sup>115</sup> Scholars have particularly addressed the ways in which

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<sup>111</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, chap. 5.

<sup>112</sup> There is not, at time of writing, an entire scholarly volume dedicated to PIE.

<sup>113</sup> Major chapters have been written by Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation*, 127–60; Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, chap. 5; Wolmar, 'The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s'; Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, chap. 6; Philip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 74–77; Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 35; Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present Day* (London: Virago, 2007), 80.

<sup>114</sup> Liz Kelly, 'Weasel Words: Paedophiles and the Cycle of Abuse', *Trouble and Strife*, no. 33 (1996); Christian Wolmar, *Forgotten Children: The Secret Abuse Scandal in Children's Homes* (London: Vision Paperbacks, 2000); Waites, *The Age of Consent*; Anthony Douglas, *Partnership Working* (London: Routledge, 2008); Sarah Nelson, *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse: Radical Approaches to Prevention, Protection and Support* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016).

<sup>115</sup> Douglas, *Partnership Working*, 24.



PIE sought to further their own campaigning by creating alliances with larger gay and non-gay activist groups including the NCCL (now Liberty), Gay Liberation Front (GLF), the Gay News group, the Gay Left Collective, and the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE).<sup>116</sup>

Whilst there was a vocal group within radical academia who supported PIE's right to be heard in the 1970s and 80s, scholarship now takes a dim view of the group's activities.<sup>117</sup> This has been replicated across other spheres. Once PIE visibly began to push for the abolition of the age of consent (having previously focused on defending the right of paedophiles to their sexual feelings, and on building a discourse of children's liberation and sexual autonomy), there was a groundswell of opposition from several areas: the anti-permissive Right, the media, and the activist groups with which PIE had attempted to partner in the first place.<sup>118</sup> Thomson states that 'the space that had briefly made public debate about [PIE's] arguments possible had disappeared. The issue was now one cast firmly in black and white'.<sup>119</sup> It is apparent that much historical scholarship and media coverage of PIE to date – coming as it does from recent environments seemingly more attuned to the harmful realities of child sexual abuse – veer towards posing the question: 'what was everyone thinking?'<sup>120</sup> Recent media and magazine articles have sought to retell the PIE story through a longer historical lens.<sup>121</sup> There are contemporary

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<sup>116</sup> See especially Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 109–29. PIE had a role at the CHE's Sheffield conference in 1975.

<sup>117</sup> Activist Ian Pace has criticised Kenneth Plummer, Donald J. West, Brian Taylor and Jeffrey Weeks as examples of academics who have either supported the claims of paedophiles, or did not do enough to disown them. See also for a recent summary of academic support for paedophilia Andrew Gilligan, "'Paedophilia Is Natural and Normal for Males'", *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 July 2014, sec. Comment, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/10948796/Paedophilia-is-natural-and-normal-for-males.html>.

<sup>118</sup> Wolmar, 'The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s'; Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*; Thomson, *Lost Freedom*.

<sup>119</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 178.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Wolmar's use of the word 'preposterous' in describing PIE's aims, Wolmar, *Forgotten Children*; Wolmar, 'The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s'.

<sup>121</sup> Jon Henley, 'Paedophilia: Bringing Dark Desires to Light', the Guardian, 3 January 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/jan/03/paedophilia-bringing-dark-desires-light>; Guy Adams, 'The Truth about Labour Apologists for Paedophilia: Police Probe Child Sex Group Linked to Top Party Officials in Wake of Savile', Mail Online, 18 February 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2562518/The-truth-Labour-apologists-paedophilia-Police-probe-child-sex-group-linked-party-officials-wake-Savile.html>; Wolmar, 'The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s'; Castella and Heyden, 'How Did the Pro-Paedophile Group PIE Exist Openly for 10 Years?'; Jamie Doward, 'How Paedophiles Infiltrated

considerations to the timing of such articles, most clearly the heightened sensitivity to stories of historical child sexual abuse triggered by the Jimmy Savile allegations, as well as the ensuing police investigations such as Operation Yewtree. Timing and tone are both key. Robinson had previously highlighted PIE's affiliation with the NCCL in 2007, for example, but it is notable that that did not become a major news story until a general increase in discussions about child sexual abuse in 2013.<sup>122</sup>

The PIE affair was, and has become again, an emblem for wider debates around permissiveness and British moral structures in the 1970s. Christian Wolmar has critiqued the role of the Left, commenting that 'the failure of supporters of greater sexual freedom to distinguish between openness and exploitation meant that for a time paedophilia almost became respectable'.<sup>123</sup> For Thomson, meanwhile, 'the political and moral Right ... came to recognize the issue of paedophilia as one that could provide a focus for a broader critique of permissiveness having gone too far'.<sup>124</sup> Robinson agrees that 'PIE was seen as evidence of the worst excesses of the post-1968 liberation movements'.<sup>125</sup> Yet a view of PIE as a kind of failed experiment in pushing the fringes of sexual revolution does not tell the whole story. I have explored the conditions and connections of 1960s and 1970s Britain to explain how and why PIE was able to emerge and gain traction, but also the forces (such as feminist activism and research) that meant the group failed. In the process I have located PIE within the cultural, intellectual and legal movements that helped to facilitate its public emergence in 1975. This groundwork makes a contribution to understandings of PIE and wider 1970s change, and acts as a platform for the linguistic analysis that follows.

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the Left and Hijacked the Fight for Civil Rights', *The Guardian*, 2 March 2014, sec. Politics, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/mar/02/how-paedophiles-infiltrated-the-left-harriet-harman-patricia-hewitt>; Gilligan, "Paedophilia Is Natural and Normal for Males".

<sup>122</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 130.

<sup>123</sup> Wolmar, *Forgotten Children*, 153.

<sup>124</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 177.

<sup>125</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 131.

## Speaking about PIE

At this stage of the case study I turn to representations of child sexual abuse and adult sexual attraction to children with reference, in particular, to media reporting on PIE (and also self-representation by PIE) during the period 1975-1981. By documenting the ways in which the media, government, activists and legal groups represented PIE, I highlight evolutions made since the period covered in the Moors murder case study. I also pull out changes in the ways that groups in Britain interpreted meaning and navigated narratives related to adult sex with children. There are four key findings. First, there was a significant increase in the way that the media came to *directly* represent the issue of adult sexual attraction to children through language, and the primary mechanism for this was through usage of the terms 'paedophile' and 'paedophilia'. Second, when the popular press spoke about 'paedophilia' and 'paedophiles' between 1975 and 1981, it was almost universally speaking about PIE, and *not* paedophilia or paedophiles more generally (although representations from, say, the academic profession differed in this regard). Third, through these representations it is clear that there was an immediate, hostile and public backlash to both PIE and the broader concept of adult sex with children. Finally, there is evidence that the PIE case brought out the continued conflation of paedophilia and homosexuality in both linguistic and attitudinal terms, across media and government.

The mechanics of the media changed between 1966 and 1975. Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle have noted how in press reporting, previously euphemistic language structures (as documented in my case study of the Moors murders reporting) had 'imploded', and how Rupert Murdoch's relaunch of *The Sun* in 1969 changed the tone of tabloid reporting: 'more populist, outspoken and interventionist'.<sup>126</sup> *The Sun's* success also had a substantial impact on circulation figures; it was the only major daily tabloid to increase its readership between 1966 (the time of the Moors murders trial) and 1975 (the year after

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<sup>126</sup> Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle, 'Scandals and Silences: The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse' (History & Policy, 4 August 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/scandals-and-silences-the-british-press-and-child-sexual-abuse>.

PIE was launched).<sup>127</sup> Whilst the circulation decreases for rival papers (*Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*) can be put down in part to *The Sun's* increased market share, there was also a wider declining trend in tabloid readership: from 13.523 million in 1966 down to 11.963 million in 1975.<sup>128</sup> This trend was replicated amongst the popular Sunday newspapers; total average circulation in 1966 was 21.112 million but this dropped to just 17.633 million by 1975.<sup>129</sup> Sales of broadsheets (both dailies and Sundays) remained more constant.<sup>130</sup> This tells us that either people were consuming less popular media on the whole, or more likely that they were consuming different types of media to the detriment of traditional newspaper titles. One evident explanation is the increase in household television ownership, up from 17.8 million sets in 1966 to 19.2 million in 1975, and with this a growth in viewing figures.<sup>131</sup> There was also a large increase in 'underground' press outlets such as the *International Times*, which was launched in London in 1966 to a crowd of 2,500 people; this has been described by Elizabeth Nelson as the symbolic beginning of the countercultural movement in the UK.<sup>132</sup>

The 1970s were a moment of loosened and increasingly direct visual representational attitudes. Artist Graham Ovenden – later convicted in 2013 for indecency – produced photographs representing childhood life, as well as nude portraits of girls.<sup>133</sup> Such visual developments – much like the arguments of PIE – have appeared to some current commentators as 'yesterday's hip romanticism [that now looks] deeply worrying and bizarre'.<sup>134</sup> PIE both had an impact on and drew on this visual culture. The 1978 Protection of Children Act, driven by Cyril Townsend MP, outlawed 'indecent images' of children. Townsend cited the

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<sup>127</sup> The circulation of *The Sun* increased from 1.238 million in 1966 to 3.446 million in 1975, Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, *United Newspapers PLC and Fleet Holdings PLC: A Report on the Proposed Transfer of Fleet Holdings PLC to United Newspapers PLC* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1985), 5.

<sup>128</sup> Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, 5.

<sup>129</sup> Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, 6.

<sup>130</sup> See for example *The Daily Telegraph*, whose readership moved only from 1.353 million in 1966 to 1.331 million by 1975, Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, 5, 6.

<sup>131</sup> 'TV Ownership | BARB', accessed 31 December 2016, <http://www.barb.co.uk/resources/tv-ownership/>.

<sup>132</sup> Nelson, *British Counter-Culture 1966-73*, 45.

<sup>133</sup> For example, Graham Ovenden, *Aspects of Lolita* (London: Academy Editions, 1976).

<sup>134</sup> Jonathan Jones, 'Graham Ovenden: Artist Thrived among 1970s Self-Conscious Decadence', *The Guardian*, 2 April 2013, sec. UK news, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/apr/02/graham-ovenden-artist-1970s-decadence>.

‘abominable child sex group’ PIE in his second reading of the draft bill, and had also been influenced by a BBC *Tonight* documentary on the ‘Lolita market’ of child pornography (which itself featured some of those pornographic representations).<sup>135</sup> In the end, too, it was physical representations of abuse – the contact advertisements that were alleged to elicit pornographic imagery of children – and not physical actions that were the basis of prosecutions against PIE. This marks a key point in the changing legal frameworks in which child sexual abuse cases have been brought to court in the UK. In the case of PIE members, where prosecutions for actual bodily abuse were not possible, there was recourse to laws such as the Obscene Publications Act (1959) and the Protection of Children Act (1978), and ultimately charges related to conspiracy to pervert public morals. Indeed, some recent news reporting has described PIE more in terms of the content they disseminated – as ‘purveyors of obscene material’ – than the views and language they put forward, indicating the significance of visual representations.<sup>136</sup>

Because of these representational developments and the ways in which the PIE story intersected with them, I have slightly widened the range of sources for this case study. I include television, radio and smaller press outlets, in addition to the larger newspapers and parliamentary records (Hansard). Much of the PIE episode was played out in academic debates, as well as the pages of PIE’s own journals and papers; these are also included here, along with a particular focus on Tom O’Carroll’s output such as his 1980 book *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*. Whilst I talk about constructing linguistic frameworks, I am also conscious that different registers applied in different media forms.<sup>137</sup> Finally, I have considered the impact of visual culture – art, video and pornography – and their impact on representations of PIE for this study. I believe the following findings confirm the PIE episode as a key moment – and possibly even a turning point – for representations of adult sexual attraction to

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Hansard, HC Deb 10 February 1978 Vol 943 Cc1826-922’.  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1978/may/05/protection-of-children-bill>;  
 ‘Kiddie Porn’, *Tonight* (BBC, November 1977).

<sup>136</sup> ‘Paedophile Campaigner Is Jailed’, *BBC*, 13 August 2007, sec. Leicestershire,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/leicestershire/6944369.stm>.

<sup>137</sup> For example, the types of language used in broadsheet newspapers were very different to that in not only the tabloids, but also the new countercultural press.

children, as well as for observable toughening of public attitudes. As Thomson puts it, 'the paedophile movement had provided an object for public pillory ... the main result was to highlight the danger as never before and to give it a name and a focus'.<sup>138</sup> It gave linguistic form to what had previously been nebulous and inexact, and marks the point at which 'paedophilia' and 'paedophile' became hegemonic forms of describing sexual attraction to children, and people who were sexually attracted to children.

### **Paedophilia Unbound**

The years 1975 to 1981 also saw direct descriptions of what 'paedophilia' and 'paedophile' actually *meant*. As this case study, unlike the previous one, does not look at specific instances of child sexual abuse, I talk more frequently here of 'adult sexual attraction to children' than 'abuse', though the two issues are of course connected. As explored in the introductory chapters, it is difficult to measure the ways in which prevalence of abuse has increased or shifted over time, but the emergence of a 'paedophile' vocabulary is significant because it suggests that there were profound changes in the way that matters related to child sexual abuse were interpreted and represented in the 1970s.<sup>139</sup> In the 1960s, my Moors murders case study showed, evidence of direct linguistic expression relating to child sexual abuse cases was euphemistic and limited in the media. The word 'paedophilia' itself was not applied at all in that period, either to the Moors case or to others. This had changed by the mid-seventies. Reflecting on his controversial experiences, Tom O'Carroll wrote in 1980 that

(t)he general public in the UK has long been aware of 'child molesting' and 'perversion'. But only in the 1970s did it come to hear about 'paedophilia', a designation suddenly lifted from the obscurity of medical textbooks.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 178, 183.

<sup>139</sup> On prevalence of abuse, see for example Louise Jackson, 'Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: Prosecution and Prevalence 1918-1970' (History & Policy, 18 June 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/child-sexual-abuse-in-england-and-wales-prosecution-and-prevalence-1918-197>.

<sup>140</sup> O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

O'Carroll's comments here are broadly accurate. 'Paedophilia' had not been found as a term in the popular press before, and when it did emerge it was referring specifically to PAL and then PIE members who had claimed it as a means of assuming sexual identity.

1975 saw the first newspaper reports to mention the word 'paedophilia'. Strikingly, several authors of these reports felt the need to explain what exactly paedophilia was in a way that was not repeated later; this suggests that media outlets were not confident in the general public's ability to recognise and understand the term. The same seemed true in Parliament where Earl Ferrers explained to his audience in a 1976 House of Lords debate that 'child molesters, who are called paedophiles, have already formed organisations known as the Paedophile Action for Liberation and the Paedophile Information Exchange'.<sup>141</sup> In an exposé branding PAL members the 'vilest men in Britain', journalists from *The Sunday People* explained that '(p)aedophile means literally: "Lover of children." But these vile men do not talk of normal love of a child. They mean SEX WITH A CHILD'.<sup>142</sup> Michael Parkin of *The Guardian* described Keith Hose as a 'paedophile – one who is sexually attracted to children', and Ronald Butt of *The Times* wrote of 'child-molesters, who are now euphemistically called paedophiles'.<sup>143</sup> It is notable that Butt viewed the term 'paedophile' as euphemistic, given that in my analysis use of the term actually marked a linguistic shift away from what had been euphemistic descriptors in previous decades. These articles reflect a lack of familiarity with talking specifically about paedophilia, and appear purely reactive to PIE's self-reflexive use of the term. Also notable is the de-gendered language used in parliament and the press, with politicians and journalists referring to 'children' rather than 'boys', despite the fact that such press articles often positioned PIE within the gay rights movement. After 1975, a large volume of newspaper reporting on PIE was produced. Articles openly focused on paedophilia and the activities of

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<sup>141</sup> 'Hansard, HL Deb 26 February 1976 Vol 368 Cc811-4'.

<sup>142</sup> Harry Warschauer and Angus Mayer, 'The Vilest Men in Britain: An Inquiry That Will Shock Every Mum and Dad', *The Sunday People*, 25 May 1975. Incidentally, Warschauer was one of the rescued children brought to the UK by Sir Nicholas Winton's *Kindertransport* during the Second World War.

<sup>143</sup> Michael Parkin, 'Child-Lovers Win Fight for Role in Gay Lib', *The Guardian*, 26 August 1975; Ronald Butt, 'Who Really Wants a Change in the Age of Consent?', *The Times*, 22 January 1976.

paedophiles – and were nearly always specific to PIE.<sup>144</sup> Discussions in the Houses of Parliament also matched this trend; where there were zero references to ‘paedophilia’ or ‘paedophile’ before 1976, the rest of the decade shows eleven separate debates containing those terms.<sup>145</sup>

In addition to simply using ‘new’ terminology, newspaper articles also spoke more openly and directly about matters of adult sex with children and child sexuality than had been seen, arguably, since the childhood prostitution debates in the Victorian period. In an article in *The Guardian* from 1977 the author, Tom Crabtree, discussed in detail the morality of the PIE debates and the question of whether a child can consent to sex.<sup>146</sup> The same article contained a quote from the moral campaigner Mary Whitehouse, reflecting the high-profile nature of discussions about paedophilia.<sup>147</sup> The directness of newspaper reporting was matched in other media fields. The London Broadcasting Company (LBC), a radio station based in the capital, conducted a series of interviews around the Love and Attraction conference of September 1977. These were with both paedophile advocates (such as O’Carroll and the Dutch MP Edward Brongersma) and opponents (Conservative MP Rhodes Boyson and Maurice O’Leary, Chairman of the British Union of Family Organisations).<sup>148</sup> O’Leary’s interviewer asked him if it made sense that individuals found children ‘very sexy’.<sup>149</sup> O’Leary was also asked how he felt about groups such as PIE pushing for the abolition of the age of consent given that he had a young daughter himself, leading him to talk candidly about the sexual values he would hope his daughter to have once she became a young adult.<sup>150</sup> These forthright

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<sup>144</sup> See for some examples ‘London Letter’, *The Guardian*, 5 September 1975; Tom Crabtree, ‘Adults Only’, *The Guardian*, 19 May 1977; ‘For Adults Only’, *Daily Mirror*, 24 August 1977; ‘Paedophilia Advocate given Extra Leave’, *The Times*, 31 August 1977; ‘PIE Man Thrown Off Campus’, *The Guardian*, 8 September 1977.

<sup>145</sup> Figures taken from the *Hansard* Parliamentary archive.

<sup>146</sup> Crabtree, ‘Adults Only’.

<sup>147</sup> Crabtree. Mary Whitehouse had it that ‘this ... is the twentieth century manifestation of the slave trade, of the industrial exploitation of children in the last century’.

<sup>148</sup> Rhodes Boyson, Paedophile conference, interview by Peter Spencer (Unconfirmed), London Broadcasting Company, 1977; Maurice O’Leary, Paedophile conference, interview by Peter Spencer (Unconfirmed), London Broadcasting Company, 1977; Tom O’Carroll, Love and attraction conference, interview by Unconfirmed, London Broadcasting Company, September 1977; Edward Brongersma, Paedophilia, interview by Unconfirmed, London Broadcasting Company, August 1977.

<sup>149</sup> O’Leary, Paedophile conference.

<sup>150</sup> O’Leary.



discussions reveal an increased conversational directness on matters relating to child sexuality.

In scholarly publications and pieces, too, paedophilia was evidently higher up the agenda from the mid-1970s onwards. O'Carroll's book *Paedophilia: The Radical Case* (1980) was reviewed in the *London Review of Books (LRB)* by Mary-Kay Wilmers. She offered a robust critique of O'Carroll's style and aims, labelling it 'an edgy, self-righteous book and a lacklustre piece of propaganda'.<sup>151</sup> However, she also gave a fair hearing to O'Carroll's claims in a way that echoed liberal press publications with which PIE members were actively involved themselves. In the pages of journals such as the CHE's *Broadsheet*, *Gay News* and the Marxist *Gay Left*, extended and earnest debates discussing the nature and morality of paedophilia were played out with contributions and letters from age of consent lobbyists such as O'Carroll and Keith Hose, although by 1977 *Gay News* came to repudiate its initially supportive stance on PIE.<sup>152</sup> The open atmosphere of the discussion was nonetheless reflected in the readers' responses printed in the following issue. Many of these came from PIE members and described the *Gay News'* new position variously as 'smug', 'self-righteous', 'back stabbing' and – perhaps most damningly of all – as evidence that it had become a 'straight paper'.<sup>153</sup> As for the journal of the *Gay Left*, which ran from 1975 to 1980, two of its total ten issues focused to a large extent on paedophilia. One book chapter-length article appearing in 1976, co-written by the whole Collective, argued that PIE had a right to be heard and framed paedophilia as an urgent social topic. Reader responses and a long piece from O'Carroll followed in further issues.<sup>154</sup> These findings show that less popular, 'high' forms of media (along with radical academia) had been for PIE a more fruitful area for furthering their aims than the 'low' popular press, although all media forms had come to represent paedophilia in one way or another.

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<sup>151</sup> Mary-Kay Wilmers, 'Young Love', *London Review of Books*, 4 December 1980.

<sup>152</sup> 'The PIE Affair', *Gay News*, September 1977.

<sup>153</sup> 'Editorial & Letters', *Gay News*, September 1977.

<sup>154</sup> See Roger Moody, 'Paedophile Politics (Letter)', *Gay Left: A Gay Socialist Journal* 2 (Spring 1976); The Gay Left Collective, 'Happy Families? Paedophilia Examined'; Gough, 'Childhood Sexuality & Paedophilia'; O'Carroll, 'Paedophilia: A Response'.

PIE and other advocate groups' self-representation was another critical way in which paedophilia came to be openly represented. Writing in 1980, O'Carroll summed up PIE's approach to representation as follows:

What did I think [PIE members] wanted? Some intellectual articles, by all means, but articles designed for them, not for the relatively ignorant outside world. I also felt that we should get as near as the law would allow us to doing a kind of Forum page – publishing letters from readers on the details of sexual relationships. There was also scope for erotic fiction, and erotic pictures of children ... And why not? What could be more in tune with our aim of taking the sense of guilt out of sexuality than to be cheerfully erotic about it ourselves?<sup>155</sup>

This troubling passage throws some light on O'Carroll's motivations as well as containing an admission of the deliberately stark forms of representation he and his colleagues used.<sup>156</sup> Depictions such as PIE's 'erotic pictures of children' were certainly a highly direct and highly controversial visual form, and they were not limited to the *Magpie* journals. Russ J. Graham, director of the *Gay News Archive Project*, has commented of *Gay News* that '(s)ome later issues include non-sexual naked photographs of children as part of the age of consent debate. These *have* been edited [for the archive] – modern mores simply do not allow for such pictures to appear any more'.<sup>157</sup> That such images were reproduced originally nonetheless demonstrates the growing extent of 1970s pro-paedophile representation, which was challenged by government.

My findings – of increased expression related to matters of paedophilia specifically and child sexuality more generally – marry with the consensus in historical and sociological work that this period saw an exponential growth in discussion and concern over the broader issue of child sexual abuse as outlined in the introductory chapters. Adrian Bingham has spoken of 'sudden and dramatic shifts' in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the press began to treat

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<sup>155</sup> O'Carroll feared that 'if we failed to deliver the goods we could reckon on a low resubscription rate', O'Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

<sup>156</sup> O'Carroll.

<sup>157</sup> 'Gay News Archive Project', Gay News Archive Project, accessed 2 January 2017, <http://gaynewsarchive.org/project-notes/>.

paedophilia and abuse as serious matters for public concern.<sup>158</sup> Others have commented that the 1970s saw the emergence of the 'category' of the paedophile.<sup>159</sup> Thomson (2013) agrees:

Before the 1970s, the terms 'paedophile' and 'paedophilia' were virtually non-existent in Britain. Now they are such an integral part of our daily language that even young children throw the abbreviated terms 'paed' and 'paedo' at one another in playground abuse. Before the 1970s, the only place one would find these terms was in specialist psychiatric literature.<sup>160</sup>

Work to date has tended to award the press and wider media a high degree of agency in bringing the issue to the forefront. Bingham points to the press' 'crusading' outlook with the paedophile the 'prime target'.<sup>161</sup> This is not to say that all press language and methods evolved in the 1970s and 1980s. Headlines relating to alleged sex offenders often continued to play on predatory imagery in ways that echoed prior decades – see the PIE member labelled the 'Beast of Berlin' in 1980, or the child murderer dubbed the 'evil Pied Piper' – showing that certain linguistic tropes endured.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, this section has sought to highlight the significant changes in the ways that adult sexual attraction to children was politicised and represented.

## **PIE and Paedophilia**

What has not been fully contended previously is the assessment that when the British popular press wrote about paedophilia, they tended to be writing only about PIE and PIE affiliates – at least until around 1981. The vast majority of articles published from 1975-1981 that referenced paedophilia also referenced

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<sup>158</sup> Adrian Bingham and Lucy Delap, 'Hidden in Plain Sight? The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse, c.1918-1970s' (History of Sexuality, Senate House, University of London, 2015).

<sup>159</sup> Steven Angelides, 'The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century', *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 126 (2005): 272–95.

<sup>160</sup> Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, 155.

<sup>161</sup> Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers?: Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 160.

<sup>162</sup> See for example 'The Beast of Berlin', *Private Eye*, November 1980; 'Murderer Free in Three Years', *Reading Post*, 25 April 2008, <https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/murderer-free-in-three-years-4253802>.

PIE.<sup>163</sup> Or rather, these articles contained the words ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ *because* their subject was PIE, and PIE had appropriated that terminology for its own causes and was regularly newsworthy. More than this, use of these words in this period was clearer and less anachronistic than later: the subject was unambiguous. ‘Paedophiles Jeered and Pelted by Angry Crowd’ was the headline to an article in *The Times* from 1977. To a current reader this seems like a familiar trope given similar headlines in recent years; the use of the term ‘paedophiles’ would not imply that the report’s subject belonged to a certain organisation. However, in this instance, the article refers specifically to PIE, and begins with: ‘Members of the Paedophile Information Exchange...’<sup>164</sup> What is apparent in reporting is the lack of separation between the self-proclaimed paedophiles involved in PIE on the one hand, and paedophilia in separate contexts (medical, social, legal, as discussed in the contextual chapter) on the other. There is evidence in parliamentary debating records that politicians were beginning to speak about paedophilia more generally, but even where PIE was not mentioned by name, these discussions still occurred with reference to the age of consent debates and the campaign movement of those who called themselves ‘paedophiles’.<sup>165</sup> This suggests that popular representations of paedophilia and paedophiles in this period were specific and *reactive* to the pro-paedophile lobby headed by PIE, and that it was those reactions that created the clear focus for concern.

There are two caveats to this assessment. The first is that the same was not true in other fields outside of popular media. As explored earlier, PIE members had themselves appropriated the term ‘paedophile’ from sexological parlance. In British and international academic and psychiatric texts,

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<sup>163</sup> See, for instance: Parkin, ‘Child-Lovers Win Fight for Role in Gay Lib’; Warschauer and Mayer, ‘The Vilest Men in Britain: An Inquiry That Will Shock Every Mum and Dad’; ‘Legalise Child Sex – Call’, *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 26 August 1975; Butt, ‘Who Really Wants a Change in the Age of Consent?’; Crabtree, ‘Adults Only’; ‘Paedophilia Advocate given Extra Leave’; ‘PIE Man Thrown Off Campus’; ‘Paedophilia Chairman Ejected from Love Conference’, *The Times*, 8 September 1977; ‘Paedophile Talks Backed by Homosexuals’, *The Times*, 30 August 1977; Penny Symon, ‘Paedophiles Jeered and Pelted by Angry Crowd’, *The Times*, 20 September 1977; ‘Three Men Fined after Paedophile Meeting’, *The Times*, 21 September 1977; ‘Paedophile Group Leader Had Beer Poured over Him’, *The Times*, 8 December 1977; ‘They Just Don’t Give A Damn’, *News of the World*, 11 June 1978; ‘Poisonous Piemen Are At It Again’, *News of the World*, 24 June 1979.

<sup>164</sup> Symon, ‘Paedophiles Jeered and Pelted by Angry Crowd’.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Hansard, HL Deb 26 February 1976 Vol 368 Cc811-4’; ‘Hansard, HL Deb 14 June 1977 Vol 384 Cc30-74’.

paedophilia had been discussed long before the emergence of PIE – albeit often in passing.<sup>166</sup> And as set out above, the PIE episode occurred amidst a much larger context of discussions around paedophilia in radical academic writing and conferences, as well as other leftist journals and publications both in Britain and abroad. These tended to be theoretical, but with an eye on potential policy consequences. Mentions of – and reactions to – paedophilia in domestic contexts elsewhere (notably Germany, the Netherlands, France and the United States) were specific to the paedophile movements occurring there, rather than in Britain. The second caveat is that the popular media’s conflation of paedophilia and PIE was a transient phenomenon between 1975 and around 1981. This is not to say that there were not articles about PIE after that; indeed, reporting on continuing prosecutions of PIE members persisted well into the 1980s and has been revisited in the 2010s. Rather, there is evidence showing that post-1981, the terms ‘paedophile’ and ‘paedophilia’ were also being used in specific cases *not* involving PIE, as well as in wider debates – but it was the PIE affair that was responsible for opening the door to these popular terminological changes.

One prominent example was a case involving the foreign intelligence officer and diplomat Sir Peter Hayman (an ex-PIE member), described in a *Private Eye* investigation (1980-81) as ‘a sexual deviant’ whose proclivities included ‘every conceivable perversion’.<sup>167</sup> Geoffrey Dickens MP used parliamentary privilege to ‘out’ Hayman after no prosecution was forthcoming, stating in an ITN interview in March 1981 that the lack of a prosecution ‘further reinforced my suspicion that the establishment were seeking to cover things up’.<sup>168</sup> In the wake of Dickens’ action, press outlets began writing about the

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<sup>166</sup> For intermittent scholarly British examples stretching back to the 1930s, see A. J. Brock and A. Piney, ‘Social Pathology’, *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 4070 (1939): 40–40; W. Norwood East, ‘Sexual Offenders. A British View’, *The Yale Law Journal* 55, no. 3 (1946): 527–57; G. Th. Kempe, ‘The Homosexual in Society’, *The British Journal of Delinquency* 5, no. 1 (1954): 4–20; J. Housden, ‘The Relative Frequency of the Sexual Paraphilias as Demonstrated by 159 Graffiti’, *The British Journal of Criminology* 3, no. 3 (1963): 290–93; Robert O’Kell, ‘The Victorian Counter-Culture: An Interdisciplinary Conference’, *Victorian Studies* 17, no. 4 (1974): 431–35.

<sup>167</sup> ‘The Beast of Berlin’; ‘Beast of Berlin (2)’, *Private Eye*, February 1981.

Hayman was referenced anonymously as a ‘senior civil servant’ in Tom O’Carroll’s trial for corrupting public morals.

<sup>168</sup> ITV News, ‘Paedophile Case’ (ITN, 16 March 1981), <http://jiscmediahub.ac.uk/record/display/039-00009639>; recently *The Guardian* reported that Margaret Thatcher insisted Hayman not be named before Dickens’ decision, Peter Walker, ‘Thatcher Stopped Peter Hayman Being Named as Paedophile-Link Civil Servant’, *The Guardian*,

implications of the Hayman story with reference to paedophilia more generally; Ronald Butt of *The Times* referred, for instance, to ‘pornographic material (of a paedophiliac kind)’.<sup>169</sup> A related case to Hayman’s emerged in 1982 with the prosecution of intelligence officer Geoffrey Prime for treason; he had sold secrets to the KGB throughout the 1960s and 1970s. He received 35 years in jail for spying on Russia’s behalf, and a further three years for sex offences against young girls.<sup>170</sup> He was released in 2001 and labelled a ‘traitor and paedophile’ by *The Daily Telegraph*.<sup>171</sup> Infiltration is a regular theme in media reporting on both PIE and more generally during this period, given the context of the Cold War. Politicians such as Dickens, as well as the press, viewed Hayman and Prime’s paedophilic activities as a security risk because it left them open to blackmail by foreign agents.<sup>172</sup> It was also infiltration tactics that helped to uncover PIE activities and bring about its demise, both by journalists in the 1970s and then by Charles Oxley, a Merseyside headmaster who corresponded with PIE members and attended their meetings undercover.<sup>173</sup> And PIE members themselves had been accused of ‘entryism’ when asserting their own aims from within the umbrella of gay rights campaigning.<sup>174</sup> The press played on this association between paedophilia and spying as covert, major transgressions against two protected species – child and country – and this in turn represented a first move away from purely PIE-focused reporting.

Coverage of the concept of ‘paedophilia’ proliferated in the aftermath of the PIE affair. In 1983, William Watson-Sweeney was prosecuted after admitting ‘having intercourse with a friend’s daughter, aged seven’. Peter Evans of *The Times*, writing up the trial proceedings, noted that ‘the defendant was not a paedophile and had not misbehaved before’, in the opinion of Judge Brian

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2 February 2015, sec. Politics, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/02/thatcher-peter-hayman-named-paedophile-archives>.

<sup>169</sup> Ronald Butt, ‘The Questions Unanswered in the Hayman Case’, *The Times*, 26 March 1981.

<sup>170</sup> ‘MPs Foiled on Prime Debate’, *Daily Mail*, 16 September 1982.

<sup>171</sup> Philip Johnston, ‘Traitor Prime Free after 19 Years’ Jail’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 2001, sec. News, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1326330/Traitor-Prime-free-after-19-years-jail.html>.

<sup>172</sup> ‘The Beast of Berlin’; Similar rationale was applied in the 1960s, amidst fears over homosexual spies. See Jon Kelly, ‘The Era When Gay Spies Were Feared’, *BBC News*, 20 January 2016, sec. Magazine, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35360172>.

<sup>173</sup> ‘A Lust Too Gross to Allow’, *The Guardian*, 24 September 1982; David Nicholson-Lord, ‘Government “apathy” on PIE Criticized’, *The Times*, 31 August 1983.

<sup>174</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, chap. 5.

Gibbens.<sup>175</sup> This implied that *had* Watson-Sweeney been a paedophile, the case would have been worse. Gibbens also observed that the case struck him “as being one of the kind of accidents that could almost happen to anyone”, to ‘gasps of astonishment’ from the galleries. This led to the headline ‘Sex with children could happen to anyone accidentally, judge says’.<sup>176</sup> Whilst these comments betrayed a departure from supposedly more informed general debate around child sexual abuse at the time (with *The Times* pronouncedly noting that the judge was ‘aged 71’, presumably as a possible reason for his reflections), also significant is the articles’ use of the term ‘paedophile’. It suggests that newspapers and courts were beginning to define sexual abusers in a fashion that had not been visible before.

Another example followed in 1984, where Colin Evans was described as a ‘paedophile killer’ and a ‘child molester’ following his murder of schoolgirl Marie Payne.<sup>177</sup> Elements of that murder were similar to those in Ian Brady and Myra Hindley’s crimes in the 1960s (the perpetrator took photographs of the child victim before and after the murder, and conducted the burial on remote land), but newspaper descriptions of the killer and the killing in the 1980s context were more directly rendered, and linked to the actual nature of the crimes.<sup>178</sup> This suggests that the press were telling more overt stories about sexual crimes against children. A small but telling indication that the term ‘paedophile’ had become embedded in British cultural understanding by 1983 can be found in newspaper television listings, where editor Peter Dear described Howard, the main character of the 1981 film *Fallen Angel*, as ‘a paedophile’.<sup>179</sup> These shifts took place amidst the wider fears over child sexual abuse in the mid-1980s, and which I explore in the next chapter as a lead-in to my analysis of the Cleveland affair of 1987. Kitzinger has noted that reporting of

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<sup>175</sup> Peter Evans, ‘Judge Jails Child Sex Man for Two Years and Says He Was Misreported’, *The Times*, 20 December 1983.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Sex with Children Could Happen to Anyone Accidentally, Judge Says’, *The Times*, 17 December 1983.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Murder of Marie Payne’ (London Broadcasting Company, 17 December 1984).

<sup>178</sup> Stewart Tandler, ‘Girl’s Killer Jailed for 30 Years’, *The Times*, 18 December 1984; Stewart Tandler, ‘Marie Payne Was Fatal Victim of a Persistent Child Molester’, *The Times*, 18 December 1984; Philip Webster, ‘Closer Scrutiny of Child Molesters’, *The Times*, 20 December 1984.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Dear, ‘Today’s Television and Radio Programmes’, *The Times*, 21 June 1983, The Times Digital Archive.

sexual abuse in *The Times* increased by 300% between 1985 and 1987.<sup>180</sup> My conclusion on terminological usage is that it was only after 1981 that most people in Britain began to interpret 'paedophilia' as a concept outside the reference point of PIE, and that usage became increasingly widespread after this point.

### **"Somewhere between Jesus Christ and Jack the Ripper": Hostility to PIE**

Contrary to the conclusions of some scholarship, as well as current-day press reporting that perhaps overplays the amount of support PIE gained between 1975 and 1981, I have found that popular appraisals of PIE and paedophilia were almost universally negative and quickly administered, particularly in the written press.<sup>181</sup> This hostility manifested clearly in newspaper headlines, opinion pieces, governmental debates, interviews and public action. The 1975 tabloid account that first announced PIE to the wider British public introduced them as the 'vilest men in Britain', with the writers asserting that 'most of [PIE's] members shouldn't be allowed within a million miles of a child' and that the activities of members amounted to 'depravity'.<sup>182</sup> Later, with echoes of that article, the *News of the World* (1978) labelled O'Carroll the 'nastiest man in Britain' in a piece looking into his previous employment history. He had been sacked from a school job because of an inappropriate relationship with a male student.<sup>183</sup> A fellow attendee of O'Carroll's at an academic conference in 1977 described him as 'somewhere between Jesus Christ and Jack the Ripper'. This comment seemed to register a perverse admiration for O'Carroll in his steadfast exposition of such unpopular views, but also utterly denounced the nature of those views.<sup>184</sup> Tom Crabtree of *The Guardian* reacted to the PIE affair by reflecting that 'when you look around you at reality, it's sometimes enough to

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<sup>180</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 35.

<sup>181</sup> Kitzinger has written that the press only began to 'confront' the notion of sexual violence against children in the 1980s, Kitzinger, 35.

<sup>182</sup> Warschauer and Mayer, 'The Vilest Men in Britain: An Inquiry That Will Shock Every Mum and Dad'.

<sup>183</sup> 'Why a School Sacked the Nastiest Man in Britain', (*News of the World*), 25 June 1978.

<sup>184</sup> 'PIE Man Thrown Off Campus'.



make you physically ill'.<sup>185</sup> The *Daily Mirror* declared that 'the idea of sex between adults and toddlers is totally repulsive to the overwhelming majority of mature people' and, exasperatedly, that 'The Daily Mirror is a tolerant newspaper. But tolerance has its limit. AND THIS IS IT'.<sup>186</sup> The *News of the World* seemed to be summing up the majority view with its open demand to PIE in 1978: 'KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OUR CHILDREN'.<sup>187</sup>

In interviews covering the 1977 Love and Attraction conference attended by O'Carroll, broadcast journalists also expressed outright distaste, with one stating directly to Dutch paedophile advocate Brongersma that 'I'm sure I speak for millions when I say I'm full of revulsion for paedophilia. You don't think paedophiles might benefit from psychiatric help?'<sup>188</sup> Brongersma himself noted the mood of hostility in the UK towards paedophilia, stating that he was 'surprised by the reaction here' and comparing it to the Netherlands where 'as many people' thought the age of consent should be abolished as not.<sup>189</sup> O'Carroll was forcibly ejected by security staff at the conference following a public protest regarding his presence. In a radio interview he stated that he was 'absolutely disgusted' by his treatment but that he was 'not surprised at all, in the present climate of British opinion'.<sup>190</sup> The reaction to O'Carroll mirrored other direct public action, with PIE members being 'jeered, spat upon and pelted with stink bombs and rotten eggs by a screaming crowd of [around 150] demonstrators' as they attempted to attend a meeting in the same year; most of these protestors were from the National Front.<sup>191</sup> In parliament too the alarm was evident, with a call from Earl Ferrers in the House of Lords 'that children ought to be protected from precisely this type of thing'.<sup>192</sup> Rhodes Boyson MP described PIE members as 'nutcases' and wondered 'what will the next group ask for? The legitimisation of rape, or sexual murder? ... It reminds me of Weimar Germany'.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Crabtree, 'Adults Only'.

<sup>186</sup> 'For Adults Only'.

<sup>187</sup> 'They Just Don't Give A Damn'.

<sup>188</sup> Brongersma, Paedophilia.

<sup>189</sup> Brongersma.

<sup>190</sup> O'Carroll, Love and attraction conference.

<sup>191</sup> Symon, 'Paedophiles Jeered and Pelted by Angry Crowd'.

<sup>192</sup> 'Hansard, HL Deb 26 February 1976 Vol 368 cc811'.

<sup>193</sup> Boyson, Paedophile conference.

This sample displays the remarkable strength of language and feeling in popular reactions to PIE. Reading and listening through these media archives, what struck me most was not the notion that PIE (once it became visible) was somehow tolerated in 1970s Britain, but quite the opposite: the absolute common hostility to what PIE was contending, and remarkable similarities to current-day reporting and behaviour – both in terms of attitude and linguistic tropes. During a 1977 protest against PIE members,

Mr Gerald Kemp, a reporter for *The Daily Telegraph*, was badly scratched under his eye and had his coat torn as he went in to cover the meeting. Before he had a chance to explain that he was a reporter, one of the crowd shouted, “He’s one of them.”<sup>194</sup>

This detail evokes more recent events, such as mob protests in the wake of Sarah Payne’s murder in 2000, or the infamous coverage of the paediatrician whose home was vandalised with spray-paint reading ‘paedo’.<sup>195</sup> In its 1975 exposé of PIE, *The Sunday People* narrowed down those revealed as members to quite specific locations and details, informing readers that ‘[Name Redacted] ... lives in a cottage in the grounds of Oakwood Hospital’ and that ‘[Name Redacted] ... drives a white MGB sports car’.<sup>196</sup> This was echoed when the *News of the World* launched its infamous ‘name and shame’ campaign listing locations of convicted sex offenders, also after Payne’s murder.<sup>197</sup> What emerges is a sense that the discursive tropes of current popular representations of the ‘paedo’, and the monstrous depictions and baying mobs, are also to be found in 1970s portrayals of the PIE paedophiles. To be clear, not all reaction to PIE was uniformly critical. Traditionally ‘elite’, leftist publications often gave more guarded, lukewarm reactions than the popular press, and radical academia took the arguments of paedophiles seriously.<sup>198</sup> Nonetheless, the popular mood of opposition to PIE as represented in the press may be surmised from a letter

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<sup>194</sup> Symon, ‘Paedophiles Jeered and Pelted by Angry Crowd’.

<sup>195</sup> Brendan O’Neill, ‘Whispering Game’, *BBC News Magazine*, 16 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4719364.stm>.

<sup>196</sup> Warschauer and Mayer, ‘The Vilest Men in Britain: An Inquiry That Will Shock Every Mum and Dad’.

<sup>197</sup> Ryan Dille, ‘To Name and Shame’, BBC News, 24 July 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/848759.stm>.

<sup>198</sup> See above for discussion of paedophilia in radical academia, but indeed it was those on the counter-cultural left who had laid some of the path for PIE in the first place. See for examples of more measured press reactions Crabtree, ‘Adults Only’; Wilmers, ‘Young Love’.

written by one of its own resigning members, who stated that ‘speaking purely for myself, I no longer feel a sense of ... security – in so far as I now feel much more at risk in expressing paedophile views than I did before this year's [1977's] campaigning began’.<sup>199</sup>

### **‘Gay Paedophiles’: Continued Conflation**

One of the recurring themes in these hostile media and political reactions to PIE is the regular conflation of paedophilia with homosexuality. This was both a new and an old trope; although reporting directly linked homosexuality to the word ‘paedophilia’ for the first time in the 1970s, there had been a long tradition of social concern about the ‘predatory masculine queer’ who preyed on young boys.<sup>200</sup> Reports that constructed paedophiles as the ‘vilest men in Britain’ were tonally redolent of prior press exposés of homosexuals and homosexual activity, such as the *Sunday Pictorial's* series on ‘Evil Men’ of 1952.<sup>201</sup> Bingham has argued that ‘the papers ... regarded the gay rights movement with suspicion, although there were some signs of change in the tone of coverage in the 1970s, with increasingly clear distinctions made between homosexuality and paedophilia.’<sup>202</sup> I want to nuance Bingham’s conclusion, given competing evidence of further press conflation of homosexuality and ‘paedophilia’. This conflation was in part a direct result of the wider paedophile movement and in particular PIE’s activities, which saw the group deliberately operate in territory – both physical and metaphorical – occupied by the Gay Liberation Front. O’Carroll pointed to the context of the gay rights movement in commenting that ‘it is not surprising that in the groups that did emerge there were far more homosexual than heterosexual paedophiles’.<sup>203</sup> Hose, speaking to *The Guardian* in 1975, said that ‘[t]here are many gay paedophiles, in and out of CHE, yet their needs and feelings are ignored in frequent attempts to dissociate

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<sup>199</sup> O’Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

<sup>200</sup> See Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 239.

<sup>201</sup> Brian Lewis, *Wolfenden’s Witnesses: Homosexuality in Postwar Britain* (London: Springer, 2016), 5.

<sup>202</sup> Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, 160.

<sup>203</sup> O’Carroll, *Paedophilia: The Radical Case*.

them from the gay movement'.<sup>204</sup> Later the repudiation of PIE by bodies such as *Gay News* reflected the damage that was being done to the gay rights movement by association.

Documentation suggests that journalists, as well as legal and governmental figures, had been influenced by the PIE-gay rights connection, or were still equating sexual violence against children with homosexuality. Lord Stamp – a consultant doctor – claimed in a Lords debate on the issue in 1977 that paedophiles are 'composed mainly, but not entirely of homosexuals (about 70 per cent., often young)'; by 'paedophiles' here he meant 'members of PIE'.<sup>205</sup> Press coverage of legal cases brought against PIE members reveals reports of one judge who 'jailed four of nine men who admitted homosexual acts with young boys'.<sup>206</sup> Instructive here is the description of the acts as 'homosexual'; the fact that the acts were carried out against 'young boys' seems almost an afterthought. This reveals residual traces of the ways in which judges spoke during the Moors murders trial, namely in connecting aspects of the murders to homosexual but not to child sexual perversion. In a separate article on the same case, PIE members were described as being members of a 'homosexual ring involving young schoolboys', rather than as child abusers who happened to be homosexuals.<sup>207</sup> In another example, Roger Gleaves, a hostel-owner who was jailed as a result of a 1975 male prostitution documentary *Johnny Go Home* (ITV), was found to have sexually abused orphans after taking them into his care. Geographer Richard Phillips points out that in 1975, Gleaves was reported as a 'homosexual'; he lured his child victims into 'homosexuality and prostitution'. But by 1998, *The Guardian* referred to Gleaves as a 'sex abuser' and 'paedophile'.<sup>208</sup> The Gay Left Collective summed up such entanglements in a leading article, commenting on the 'yawning distinction between behaviour and identity'.<sup>209</sup> This perception gap lay in the fact that the form of paedophilia that was most *visible* to the public was that of PIE – self-proclaimed, largely homosexual, and directed against young boys. It would take until the 1980s for

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<sup>204</sup> Parkin, 'Child-Lovers Win Fight for Role in Gay Lib'.

<sup>205</sup> 'Hansard, HL Deb 14 June 1977 Vol 384 cc50'.

<sup>206</sup> "'Sinister" Sex Group Rapped', *Daily Mirror*, 1 April 1978.

<sup>207</sup> 'Judge Slams Child Sex Ring', *Daily Express*, 1 April 1978.

<sup>208</sup> Phillips, 117.

<sup>209</sup> The Gay Left Collective, 'Happy Families? Paedophilia Examined', 3.

the realisation that abuse took place largely in the family home and against girls to become more embedded.

Until then, debates about paedophilia were largely about PIE, with particular concern shown for young boys, as seen in the words of prosecutor John Smyth in a case brought against *Gay News*: "I suggest the article incites people to go out and seduce little boys".<sup>210</sup> Such press fears were revisited *in extremis* following a high-profile 1983 case – 'the crime that shocked a nation', according to the *Daily Express* – in which a six-year-old boy from Brighton was collected, sexually assaulted and left on the street by three adult male attackers.<sup>211</sup> Although the offenders were never identified, some police investigatory threads had pointed towards PIE members, with the London *Standard* deciding that PIE 'bear a shame of the blame'.<sup>212</sup> Given the ongoing associations between PIE, paedophilia and homosexuality, it seemed inevitable that members of the police and the press would reach the conclusion that the three men committing the offence were gay. One article played up the location of the crime, noting that Brighton 'has one of the largest gay communities in the South'.<sup>213</sup> Another stated the police Chief Inspector's 'appeal to Brighton's 19,000-strong homosexual community for help in tracking down the three men'.<sup>214</sup> A look at this case uncovers the ways in which sexually abusive attacks on children, in the discursive context of PIE, were often depicted as homosexual ones in media and police narratives. For that reason I have argued that paedophilia and homosexuality continued to be conflated in the press and elsewhere. The press constructed sexual dangers to the family as external to it, and viewed through longstanding totems of perversity, and predators such as the 'Brighton Beasts'.<sup>215</sup> Such approaches were to be strongly challenged later in the 1980s during the Cleveland sexual abuse crisis – the subject of my final case study.

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<sup>210</sup> 'Bernard Levin Says "Gay News" Is Responsible Paper', *The Times*, 8 July 1977.

<sup>211</sup> 'The Crime That Shocked A Nation: Reward Grows to Trap the Beasts', *Daily Express*, 22 August 1983.

<sup>212</sup> 'Evil Men', *The Standard*, 25 August 1983.

<sup>213</sup> Peter Hardy, 'Sex Attack Boy Revives Car Terror Ride', *Daily Express*, 16 August 1983.

<sup>214</sup> Peter Hardy, '£31,000: Reward Cash Pours in for Attacked Boy', *Daily Express*, 18 August 1983.

<sup>215</sup> 'Wanted: The Brighton Beasts', *Daily Express*, 19 August 1983.

## Epilogue

I have argued here that the PIE moment marks a representational watershed in the postwar history of intergenerational sex. Although PIE's existence has caused surprise and consternation in scholarly work and media reporting, its arguments played on the spirit of prominent political and intellectual movements of the 1970s. Yet by giving form – both linguistic and conceptual – to the previously ambiguous representational nature of 'paedophilia', PIE was undone by its own postulations. As Robinson argues, 'rather than representing a greying of attitudes towards sexuality, debates surrounding paedophilia clearly demarcated the line beyond which behaviour was unacceptable'.<sup>216</sup> It is a challenging process to locate specific and targeted condemnation of 'paedophilia' in Britain prior to PIE, because the term was not widespread and the concept of adult sexual attraction to children had not been so clearly structured. Separately, whilst progressive, liberal movements gave a voice to minority groups such as PIE, similar forces were also behind the uncovering of the true extent of child sexual abuse and the nature and identity of abusers. Such groups therefore also facilitated PIE's demise. Linguistically, the PIE affair was a turning point because it marked the first time that 'paedophilia' had been directly and popularly discussed as such in Britain. Such discussions were negatively charged and almost universally sparked by events surrounding PIE and its members. These discussions also revealed the continuing association of homosexuality and paedophilia by certain public groups. Such debates were ultimately the springboard for more concerned, frank and aware discussions in the 1980s, where the scale of child sexual abuse was gradually revealed. In terms of overall trends, what this study of PIE has reinforced to me is not that people were somehow more tolerant of sexual activity with children in the hazy 'past'. Rather, it was that hostility took different forms at different moments. Both case studies have demonstrated that dichotomising abuse into known and unknown, or visible and silent, is too simplistic. The Moors murders brought out reactions steeped in coded fear, demonism and mystery. Responses to PIE saw a move towards a target – the 'paedophile' – that in conjunction with revelations

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<sup>216</sup> Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain*, 137.

over child sexual abuse in the 1980s led to more forceful and direct condemnation. There was a precedent for direct description and discussion on this topic, and a clearer language that marked a significant shift from the 1960s. At the same time, certain tropes reappeared and lingered, most notably notions of the homosexual, abusive predator.

In the twenty-first century, given the context of blanket coverage of historical allegations involving Jimmy Savile and other high-profile individuals, there have been attempts across institutions (media, government, judiciary, social services) to correct perceived mistakes of the past. This has been a process of discovery and erasure. In 2007, a summary of the Gay Left Collective's activities rather cautiously labelled the group's 1970s coverage of the PIE debates as 'controversial'.<sup>217</sup> Investigations into political figures living and deceased have brought homosexuality and paedophilia into the same discursive space once again, with one *Sun* report happily finding that an 'ex-PM was gay but no paedo'.<sup>218</sup> As part of this process media outlets 'rediscovered' the PIE episode, and have focused on politicians' alleged involvement with the promotion of PIE's activities and events.<sup>219</sup> Harriet Harman, then Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, was accused by the *Daily Mail* in 2013 of being an 'apologist' for PIE during her time in the NCCL.<sup>220</sup> A government-commissioned independent investigation (2014) looked into allegations that the Home Office (via the Voluntary Support Unit (VSU)) funded PIE activities in the 1970s.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> 'Gay Left Introduction by Jeffrey Weeks', May 2007, <http://www.gayleft1970s.org/intro.asp>.

<sup>218</sup> 'Brothel Madam: The Truth about Me and Heath', *The Sun*, 11 August 2015, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/180580/truth-about-me-and-heath/>.

<sup>219</sup> See, for example, 'Patricia Hewitt's Full Statement on the Paedophile Information Exchange', *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 February 2014, sec. News, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/10666511/Patricia-Hewitts-full-statement-on-the-Paedophile-Information-Exchange.html>; Liz Kelly, 'Harriet Harman Should Never Have Been the Target of This Non-Debate', *The Guardian*, 28 February 2014, sec. Comment is free, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/28/harriet-harman-non-debate-pie-nccl>; Doward, 'How Paedophiles Infiltrated the Left and Hijacked the Fight for Civil Rights'; Wolmar, 'The Great British Paedophile Support Campaign of the 70s'.

<sup>220</sup> Guy Adams, 'Apologists for Paedophiles: How Labour Deputy Harriet Harman, Her Shadow Minister Husband and Former Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt Were All Linked to a Group Lobbying for the Right to Have Sex with Children', *Daily Mail*, 14 December 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2523526/How-Labour-Deputy-Harriet-Harman-shadow-minister-husband-Health-Secretary-Patricia-Hewitt-linked-group-lobbying-right-sex-children.html>.

<sup>221</sup> The final report found no evidence to show that the VSU funded PIE. In stating that the investigation was launched following claims made in newspapers, it pointed towards the strength of media influence in current discussions about child sexual abuse: Great Britain Home

And Tom O'Carroll himself was implicated in the political fallout when it was revealed that he had taken Labour Party membership following Jeremy Corbyn's leadership victory. He was suspended from Labour in February 2016.<sup>222</sup>

Such discussions, as I signposted in the introductory chapters, are anachronistically coloured, with media and politicians both projecting meaning onto, and trying to draw conclusions from, a past where values and language were differently rendered. A current-day observer may be tempted to look at media clippings from PIE's period, note that the word 'paedophile' was being used, and conclude that language and attitudes were not dissimilar to current times. But the word 'paedophile' was new to common usage in 1974 and did not share the same processes and connotations as today. Indeed, it was PIE members such as O'Carroll that clearly appropriated an identity for themselves by using the word 'paedophile', whereas it later came to be something assigned derogatively by the press and general public. These days, O'Carroll writes regularly as 'Heretic TOC' on an online blog, presenting a 'discourse of resistance'. Labelled by a visitor to the site as an 'idiot', 'pervert' and 'lunatic', and asked whether he had become a paedophile because of rejection in his teenage years, O'Carroll replied:

I was not bad looking (check out the old newspaper photos online if you don't believe me), well educated, had a good job, and young ladies were falling over themselves to be my girlfriend. Unfortunately for them (and possibly for me!), I just didn't find adult women sexually attractive, and still don't. That's what paedophilia is: it's about being attracted to children. It is an orientation, just like being gay. It's not something you choose. It's who you are.<sup>223</sup>

O'Carroll has, though, been able to choose what to *do* with his 'orientation'. In 2006 he was convicted for distributing child pornography, and in 2016

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Office, 'Independent Investigation into the Alleged Payment of Home Office Funding to the Paedophile Information Exchange: Final Report' (Home Office, 2014).

<sup>222</sup> Laura Kuenssberg, 'Labour Suspends Paedophilia Campaigner', *BBC News*, 16 February 2016, sec. UK Politics, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-35587959>.

<sup>223</sup> See comments section at <https://tomocarroll.wordpress.com/about/>



convicted for historic instances of indecent assault and gross indecency.<sup>224</sup> In a 2015 interview with feminist journalist Julie Bindel, he bracketed himself with ‘the likes of Jimmy Savile’ in being the target of moralising witch hunters.<sup>225</sup> He is often sought out by members of the media looking for comments about paedophilia and how it may once have been tolerated – but his is now a solitary voice, detached from any wider movement.

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<sup>224</sup> ‘Two Jailed for Child Porn Library’, 20 December 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/coventry\\_warwickshire/6196811.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/coventry_warwickshire/6196811.stm); James Tozer, Josh White, and Jim Norton, ‘Paedophile Who Joined Labour Party Was Facing Trial at the Time’, *Daily Mail*, 17 February 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3450284/Notorious-paedophile-joined-Labour-party-support-Jeremy-Corbyn-facing-trial-time-abusing-two-brothers-aged-nine-ten.html>.

<sup>225</sup> Julie Bindel, ‘Britain’s Apologists For Child Abuse’, *Standpoint*, September 2015, <http://standpointmag.co.uk/node/6193/full>.

## Chapter Four

### **'Do the British Love Their Children?': Cleveland and Representations of Child Sexual Abuse in the 1980s**

#### **Introduction**

In May 1987, the British television network Channel 4 launched 'arguably the boldest innovation' of its early years in *After Dark*, a nocturnal, open-ended discussion forum that asked guest speakers to contemplate social issues such as marriage, football hooliganism and Satanism.<sup>1</sup> For its fourth week, journalist Chantal Cuer chaired a 153-minute debate titled: 'Do the British Love Their Children?'<sup>2</sup> The trigger for this particular topic was the case of four-year-old Kimberley Carlile, starved and murdered in Greenwich by her step-father Nigel Hall in late 1986, and found by enquiry to have been let down by social workers who 'failed to apply the necessary skill, judgement and care in her case'.<sup>3</sup> Carlile's former foster father, Gordon Whiteley, participated in this episode of *After Dark*.<sup>4</sup> He was joined, amongst others, by the feminist critic Germaine Greer, Lambeth Council leader Linda Bellos, and the former headmaster of Westminster School, John Rae. During the live show, Bellos stated her belief that British 'society' had failed to demonstrate that it liked children, or had made any provision for children to live fully within it. Greer argued that mating couples who bore children ought not to be entrusted with raising them alone. Rae, meanwhile, felt that the thought of parenthood without at least some violence performed on the child, such as smacking, was 'unreal' – although as long as any violent act performed was carried out 'within love', it was containable.<sup>5</sup> These raw discussions represented the urgency with which child abuse – and with it,

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Duguid, 'Channel 4 at 25', BFI Screenonline, accessed 26 April 2017, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1296872/>.

<sup>2</sup> Don Coutts, 'Do The British Love Their Children?', *After Dark* (Channel 4, 22 May 1987), <https://www.bfi.org.uk/inview/title/7611>.

<sup>3</sup> David Batty, 'Catalogue of Cruelty', *The Guardian*, 27 January 2003, sec. Society, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2003/jan/27/childrensservices.childprotection>; Samantha Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse: Negotiating the Boundaries of Public and Private, Law and Science* (London: Routledge, 2004), 18.

<sup>4</sup> Coutts, 'Do The British Love Their Children?'

<sup>5</sup> Coutts.

child protection – was forced towards the top of Britain’s social agenda by politicians, activists and the media in the 1980s, marking an important moment in postwar representations of child sexual abuse. By June 1987, a month after the broadcast, events pertaining to child sexual abuse in Cleveland would throw up the ‘greatest child abuse crisis that Britain has ever faced’, in the words of the presiding MP for Middlesbrough, Stuart Bell.<sup>6</sup> It is the historical reaction and context to those events that are the focus of this third and final case study. It builds on the discursive models of abuse constructed in prior chapters and uses Cleveland as a prism for investigating broader social change in 1980s Britain.

Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Langbaugh-on-Tees and Hartlepool comprised the historic county of Cleveland, in North East England.<sup>7</sup> In the summer of 1987, the area became the subject of significant press attention following events at the Middlesbrough General Hospital, where unusually large numbers of children had been referred to social care following diagnoses of child sexual abuse. The government ordered an inquiry (1987-88) that found that the majority of cases (98 out of 121) were incorrectly diagnosed, with those children returned to their families.<sup>8</sup> My historical analysis of Cleveland tests Margaret Thatcher’s 1988 reflection that her three consecutive governments had ‘successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain’, supposedly handing autonomy to ‘individual men and women and ... families’.<sup>9</sup> Cleveland marked a symbolic moment in which the protagonists grappled with fundamental questions such as those posed by *After Dark* and Stuart Bell MP: ‘who will provide the love and the care that each child badly needs? Would it be

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<sup>6</sup> Stuart Bell, *When Salem Came to the Boro: True Story of the Cleveland Child Abuse Case* (London: Pan Books, 1988), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Pragnell, ‘The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal: An Abuse and Misuse of Professional Power’, *Children Webmag*, accessed 17 April 2017, <http://www.davidlane.org/children/choct2002/choct2002/pragnell%20cleveland%20abuse.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, ‘Report of the Inquiry into Child Abuse in Cleveland 1987’ (London: HMSO, July 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech to the College of Europe’, (20 September 1988), <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=107332>; Margaret Thatcher, Interview for *Woman’s Own*, interview by Douglas Keay, 23 September 1987, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=106689>.

the state, through paediatricians and social workers? Or would it be the family unit?’<sup>10</sup>

The relatively recent nature of Cleveland means that critical detachment has been in short supply in analytical responses. Unlike the majority of historical commentators on Cleveland to date – I was born in 1986 – I have no personal recollection of either the prelude or the immediate aftermath to the events discussed within this chapter. A large body of popular literature, historical writing and journalistic reporting has sought to document and explain the events, and also to address the question of whether or not children involved were actually sexually abused.<sup>11</sup> Some of these accounts have been used as spaces to apportion responsibility for the crisis; this has meant an often-rancorous discourse that I unpick later in the chapter. The most notable media-focused analysis of the Cleveland episode, by Mica Nava (1988), unpicks press reaction as a means of revealing gendered behaviours.<sup>12</sup> Others have looked at Cleveland retrospectively and identified it as a milestone moment for social perspectives on child sexual abuse.<sup>13</sup>

Given the headline nature of the Cleveland affair, source material has not been in short supply.<sup>14</sup> Kitzinger has argued that Cleveland served as a ‘media template’ for future disputes, and I use cases from Rochdale (1990) and Orkney (1991) as comparators here.<sup>15</sup> They serve as useful counterpoints to Cleveland because of direct similarities relating to children being taken into social care, and also due to persistent themes – not least the heavy focus on alleged

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<sup>10</sup> Bell, *When Salem Came to the Boro*, 13–14.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Bell, *When Salem Came to the Boro*; Michael Mason, ‘Cleveland’, *London Review of Books* 10, no. 20 (10 November 1988): 3–5; Beatrix Campbell, *Unofficial Secrets: Child Abuse - The Cleveland Case* (London: Virago, 1997); Heather Bacon and Sue Richardson, ‘Child Sexual Abuse and the Continuum of Victim Disclosure: Professionals Working with Children in Cleveland in 1987’, in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 235–76; Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 11–16; Jenny Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse: Media Influence and Public Understanding of Sexual Violence Against Children* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 56–80.

<sup>12</sup> Mica Nava, ‘Cleveland and the Press: Outrage and Anxiety in the Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse’, *Feminist Review*, no. 28 (1988): 103–21.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Jean Renvoize, *Innocence Destroyed: A Study of Child Sexual Abuse* (London: Routledge, 1993), xi; Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> I have made particular use of the British Library newsroom (both digital and microfiche facilities), the BFI National Archive, the British Universities Film and Video Council archive (‘Learning on Screen’), and Hansard.

<sup>15</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 78.

satanism – which echo narratives explored elsewhere in this thesis. The archival categories consulted for this case study take account of changes in media consumption in the interim period. National broadsheet and tabloid newspapers again constitute the largest components, but local press and radio references – as during the Moors murders trial – reveal a soberer form of reporting.<sup>16</sup> I refer to televisual and radio broadcast sources, ranging from news segments and interviews that covered the Cleveland story, to more reflective on-screen debates such as those transmitted in *After Dark*. Governmental records and reports of governmental inquiries exhibit the ways in which the authors (Elizabeth Butler-Sloss on Cleveland, for instance) amassed evidence from many different sources, providing a wide window onto ways of talking about sexual abuse.<sup>17</sup> I analyse professional commentary from medical and social care experts (many of whom were involved at Cleveland, Rochdale or Orkney), as well as input from academics who have been vocal critics of many aspects of the cases. I include (anonymous) accounts from children involved and documented in official inquiry reports. These accounts make for upsetting reading in places, but by reproducing them here I provide evidence of the importance unevenly accorded to the child's voice in events.

Within the sources is evidence of a narrower linguistic and conceptual 'gap' between Cleveland and the present day, when compared to 1960s and 1970s discourses. Cleveland served as a visible emblem for discussions of sexuality, abuse and concepts of the abuser, and brought to prominence what had been contended in emotive individual cases, feminist activist works and research both in Britain and abroad: that child sexual abuse occurred largely at the hands of men, against girls, within their own families. Yet despite a seeming increase in understanding and willingness to discuss child sexual abuse, myriad competing linguistic forms – including heavily allusive, euphemistic language as seen in prior eras – are also visible in the record. My combined macro- and micro-historical approach, applied to Cleveland, throws up evidence that the realities of child sexual abuse were continuing to hit home in British life by the

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<sup>16</sup> Not all broadsheets and tabloid were analogous: they stated different political opinions, held different vested interests and used, at times, different language.

<sup>17</sup> Butler-Sloss considered the views and actions of the NSPCC, police, families involved, police surgeons, social workers, health services, the public, the media, and the children themselves.

late 1980s – but that practical and linguistic approaches to navigating those realities appeared still inchoate. It also argues that whilst Thatcher claimed to have diminished the state and empowered individuals and their families, concern for the child tended to confound and modify such movements.

### **Speaking About Cleveland**

Adrian Bingham has argued that it was in the 1980s – as a result of the ‘cultural turn’ – that historians displayed a deepening interest in ‘language, meaning and identity’, in the process ‘reassess(ing) the value of media products as historical artefacts’.<sup>18</sup> Writing in many fields, including journalism, reflected this growing interest in ‘representation’. As such, contemporaneous remarks on Cleveland display a layer of linguistic intricacy that was not always visible in my analyses of prior eras. This work intervenes in current discussions by documenting representational forms of language, expression and debate that orbited the Cleveland episode in local and national press, broadcast media, popular literature, academic movements and governmental debates, working them into my longer story of postwar renditions of child sexual abuse. The chapter therefore retains the rhetorical perspective that has been the primary preoccupation of this thesis, but it also scales different argumentative structures. As set out in the next paragraph, the chapter establishes several key themes and their rhetorical relationships with Cleveland: media, child, family, abuse, demonisation, and medicine. Because of the breadth of these topics, I move beyond purely linguistic explorations: within each of those thematic sections are contextualisations that show *why* the themes were prominent in the Cleveland moment. For that reason, the text may occasionally appear to be ‘interrupted’ by circumferential evidence – but seen in the round, this evidence is critical to interpreting the Cleveland case and in informing the linguistic reactions to it. By weaving these complex social and cultural contexts of the 1980s throughout this case study, I am therefore able to throw light, in a broader sense, on change in Britain in that decade.

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<sup>18</sup> Adrian Bingham, ‘Media Products as Historical Artefacts’, in *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*, ed. Martin Conboy and John Steel (London: Routledge, 2014), 33.

I begin with an overview of the Cleveland story, and then reference semantic trends, such as political correctness, that proliferated in 1980s media, affecting notions of acceptable language and prompting a popular backlash. My representational analysis of media output establishes that expressions of 'child sexual abuse' during the Cleveland debates were conflicting, being variously direct, indirect, open, sober, closed, nostalgic, confused and coded. I contextualise these allusive, mutable forms by connecting 'representation' to five major themes that each help to explain why the Cleveland case occurred, and also show how rhetorical interpretations of sexual matters developed in the period. First is the 'central child', along with its relationship to family and state. Debates about child protection and residual uncertainty over who should be responsible for the child – family or state – paradoxically meant that the child was sometimes neglected or a secondary consideration. Second is the connection of fears about child sexual abuse to the supposed breakdown of the nuclear family. This is visible in the forthright defences of family life proffered by politicians, legislature and newspaper outlets, all of which constructed social 'outcasts' such as homosexuals and single mothers as threats to children. Third, I locate Cleveland within an increasingly developed British milieu in regard to child sexual abuse, one that showed evidence of wide-ranging and direct media coverage, candid medical and anatomical language, and deployment of the child's voice in representations. Fourth, I highlight distinctive 'demonising' tropes at Cleveland (as well as in Rochdale and the Orkney Islands) that corresponded to conservative political discourses. A creeping blame culture affected, in particular, female social workers and doctors who were portrayed by media as interferers and envoys of the state, often with pronounced demonic descriptors. In a reconfiguration of narratives from prior decades it was these workers, rather than those originally accused, who supposedly instigated 'abuse' – both physical and symbolic – of the child and the family unit. Finally, medical developments, alongside cultural interests in horror, helped to foreground themes relating to memory and the occult in cases that allegedly included elements of 'ritual' or 'satanic' abuse of children. Drawing these discursive themes together, I contribute to wider understandings of social change in 1980s Britain, show that Cleveland is highly explicable by its sexual,

social and cultural contexts, and furnish this project's representational framework with both evolutions and entrenchments of elements found in the previous case studies.

### **Cleveland: What Happened?**

In 1987 Cleveland – like much of northern England – was suffering from the consequences of sharp industrial decline. Middlesbrough had gained economic significance in the nineteenth century as a steel-making area, with workers arriving from all over the UK and parts of Eastern Europe to what was until 1800 a farm town with a double-digit population.<sup>19</sup> Shipbuilding was a key enterprise in Stockton from the 1600s and in Middlesbrough from the 1830s, as heavy industry boomed. By the early twentieth century, the burgeoning plastic trade meant that petrochemicals dominated the economy.<sup>20</sup> The county of Cleveland was created in 1974 under the terms of 1972's reformatory Local Government Act.<sup>21</sup> In this period the county experienced the 'rapid' and since unreversed decline of its major industries, particularly steel. Chris Rea's 1985 song *Steel River* offered a melancholic and nostalgic view of his hometown Middlesbrough, hinting at a once-thriving town that had now virtually disappeared:

Say goodbye steel river  
Ten thousand bombers hit the steel river  
And many died to keep her running free  
And she survived but now she's gone forever  
Her burning heart is just a memory <sup>22</sup>

Such decline had been accelerated by 1980s conservative policy such as the deregulation of financial markets (culminating in the 'Big Bang' of 1986), which institutionalised London as the country's financial centre to the detriment of other regions and industries. The government's anti-trade unionist stance also

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<sup>19</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>20</sup> Pragnell.

<sup>21</sup> The county was abolished in 1996; see 'The Cleveland (Further Provision) Order 1995', <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1995/1747/contents/made>.

<sup>22</sup> Chris Rea, *Steel River*, Shamrock Diaries (Magnet, 1985).



contributed to the weakening of historically industrial and unionised areas such as Cleveland. The accompanying social and demographic issues were damaging and far-reaching.<sup>23</sup> With unemployment in Middlesbrough at around 26%, compared to 10.5% nationally, and a high ratio of the population aged under sixteen, Cleveland was in more than one sense a vulnerable community in 1987.<sup>24</sup>

The role of the social services was therefore critical. Cleveland County Council administered the area, with the social services structured divisionally into 'North' and 'South' and further subdivided according to the four boroughs. In her report on the Cleveland affair, Butler-Sloss noted the Social Services Department of Cleveland County's view of itself as 'positive and forward looking' when it came to childcare provision.<sup>25</sup> This was partially a result of the national fallout from the 1985 report on the death of north London child Jasmine Beckford at the hands of her stepfather, Maurice Beckford. The case and report, which explored the circumstances around the death, had important consequences for social work and led many local councils to reassess processes in their childcare departments.<sup>26</sup> Michael Bishop, Cleveland's Director of Social Services, said that he wished for his teams to 'learn from the unfortunate instances made elsewhere and ensure that we did not made [sic] similar mistakes which could result in children being avoidably abused'.<sup>27</sup> The Department in Cleveland had 'standardised and regularly monitored' recordkeeping procedures. In the lead up to 1987, the number of reported incidents of child sexual abuse was not markedly different in Cleveland than other parts of the country.<sup>28</sup> Overall, Butler-Sloss' report builds a sense that the pre-crisis environment in childcare services at Cleveland was not atypical, albeit that it existed within a wider setting of national concern.

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<sup>23</sup> Information from Charles Pragnell, Head of Research and Management Information Systems at Cleveland Social Services in 1987. He collated key statistics in the aftermath of the child sexual abuse crisis: Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>24</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 55.

<sup>25</sup> Butler-Sloss, 55.

<sup>26</sup> The Report particularly highlighted the failings of Brent Social Services Department Butler-Sloss, 56.

<sup>27</sup> Butler-Sloss, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Butler-Sloss, 55.

Butler-Sloss' 330-page report, compiled in four months and published in 1988, offered a snapshot of events and their contributing factors, along with key recommendations for future management. What it did not do was to directly answer the question of whether or not the children had been abused. It noted the large increase in the total number of referrals to Cleveland Social Services, relating to all forms of child abuse, between January and July 1987 (505 in total). 288 had been made during the same period in 1986. Of the 505, 121 children had been given a diagnosis of sexual abuse by one of two paediatricians, Marietta Higgs (78 diagnoses) and Geoffrey Wyatt (43 diagnoses), with most of them taken away from their family homes, where the abuse was thought to have occurred.<sup>29</sup> Of the 121, 32 of the children were under the age of three.<sup>30</sup> By June, when the number of referrals had begun to seriously stretch the capacity of core social care staff, there was a breakdown in the relationship between aggrieved families of the children on the one hand, and social workers and paediatricians on the other. Parents were 'shocked, angry, distressed and seemingly powerless'.<sup>31</sup> Fostering services became stretched as temporary homes were needed for large numbers of children, and there was a further internal collapse in working relations between social services, healthcare professionals and the police.<sup>32</sup> The case reached the local and then national press, and in early July the government ordered Butler-Sloss' inquiry. Her report found that in 98 of the 121 diagnoses, the children had been returned to their families. The implication was that the two paediatricians involved had acted hastily and injudiciously; as a result they were both barred from future child sexual abuse work in the area.<sup>33</sup> To this day, there is a body of social workers, academics and journalists who argue that a large number of the children had in fact been abused, and were thus returned to unsafe environments following the review.<sup>34</sup> Wyatt and Higgs have themselves pointed

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<sup>29</sup> Butler-Sloss, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Bacon and Richardson, 'Child Sexual Abuse and the Continuum of Victim Disclosure', 235.

<sup>31</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 36.

<sup>32</sup> Butler-Sloss, 62.

<sup>33</sup> Butler-Sloss, 21; Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 13.

<sup>34</sup> See Tim Tate, who produced a Channel 4 documentary asserting as much in 1997, and has campaigned in the past 30 years for 'justice' for the alleged victims at Cleveland: Tim Tate,

out the results of an independent panel, set up by Cleveland Social Services to provide second medical opinions on the children. In 86% of the re-examined cases, the panel corroborated the initial abuse diagnoses.<sup>35</sup>

Butler-Sloss' report is a largely procedural document. Its major argument is that the crisis occurred due to personnel, diagnostic and policy changes, and above all an almost total failure of interagency communication. Higgs had joined Middlesbrough General Hospital in January 1987. Her use of 'reflex anal dilatation' as a method in testing for abuse was identified as a key factor in the increased numbers of diagnoses. However, Butler-Sloss also noted that 'in only 18 cases out of 121 cases was it the sole physical sign and in no case was it the sole ground for the diagnosis'.<sup>36</sup> As for procedural change, Butler-Sloss highlighted the 'child safety order' as an important legal mechanism that blocked parental access to children in instances of suspected abuse for a specified period of time. Nationally, there was a visible trend in the length of safety orders to be brought down from the standard 28 days to 21, 14 or even 7 days. However, as events at Cleveland developed, the Department sought more extensive use of care orders of 28 days, which caused great anger amongst families. What was clear was that the sheer volume of diagnoses was overwhelming for local services, which in consequence began to function erratically. Ultimately Butler-Sloss found that it was 'unacceptable that the disagreements and failure of communication of adults should be allowed to obscure the needs of children'.<sup>37</sup>

This chapter argues that Cleveland did not happen in a bubble. Social services were already finding their way against the backdrop of 'a new recognition that young children are also subject to abuse'.<sup>38</sup> In the years just before and after Cleveland were serious abuse cases that involved comparable tribulations – the removal of children from their families, ensuing local uproar

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'Cleveland: Unspeakable Truths', *Spotlight on Abuse* (blog), 30 May 2013, <https://spotlightonabuse.wordpress.com/2013/05/30/cleveland-unspeakable-truths/>.

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Wyatt and Marietta Higgs, 'The Medical Diagnosis of Child Sexual Abuse in Cleveland in 1987: The Paediatrician's Dilemma', in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 380–81.

<sup>36</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 165.

<sup>37</sup> Butler-Sloss, 57, 244.

<sup>38</sup> Butler-Sloss, 5.

against social services, and eventual government inquiries and reports – if not quite as much opprobrium and headline space as Cleveland. Amongst the most high profile were the Rochdale and Orkney cases of 1990 and 1991, respectively.<sup>39</sup> Rochdale, like Cleveland an economically depressed northern town, saw its police force and social services take around 20 children into care amidst suspected ‘ritual sexual abuse’, following disturbing accounts from a six-year-old boy. The judge found no evidence of such abuse and heavily criticised the social workers involved.<sup>40</sup> At Orkney, nine children from four different families (one of which had previously been the focus of concern amongst authorities) were placed into care when social services feared they were being abused by a coalition of the families and local church groups.<sup>41</sup> As at Rochdale and Cleveland, social services’ actions were judged to be hasty by a commissioning review and the children were returned home. The social services later launched an appeal for several of the children to be returned to institutional care, again mirroring Cleveland.<sup>42</sup>

## Cleveland in the Media

When it came to matters of family and sexuality in the 1970s and mid-1980s, major press outlets – tabloid and broadsheet – often displayed a populist, interventionist bent that was redolent of some Victorian newspaper campaigning.<sup>43</sup> Such stances meant that newspaper journalists often became

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<sup>39</sup> Other notable examples are the Kincora Boys Home scandal in Belfast, which led to the Hughes Report of 1986, and Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire (1987), which also involved claims of satanic ritual abuse.

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Nelson, *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse: Radical Approaches to Prevention, Protection and Support* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), 112.

<sup>41</sup> For full details see the inquiry of the case: James J Clyde, ‘Inquiry into the Removal of Children from Orkney in February 1991’ (Edinburgh: HMSO, 27 October 1992).

<sup>42</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 79–80.

<sup>43</sup> Such as W.T. Stead and the *Maiden Tribute*; this was especially true of outlets owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News International such as the *The Sun*, the *News of the World* and *The Times*: Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community Through Language* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 69–93; Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle, ‘Scandals and Silences: The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse’ (History & Policy, 4 August 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/scandals-and-silences-the-british-press-and-child-sexual-abuse>; Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015).

participants in the stories they were covering. Butler-Sloss, summing up the Cleveland affair, stated that the media 'have the last word', and argued that they 'became a factor in the continuance of the crisis'. One reporter had even taken to 'dressing up as a nurse to gain admission to the wards'.<sup>44</sup> This relationship between press and subject worked both ways: the families involved in the Cleveland affair had marched from the hospital to a local newspaper's offices in order to tell of their ordeals and solicit public concern.<sup>45</sup> A key trend in the tabloid media was the rejection of so-called 'political correctness', which emerged (at least in a popular guise) in the late 1980s as a 'feature of the Left'.<sup>46</sup> Political correctness, in the view of linguistics scholar Geoffrey Hughes, displayed the paradoxical elements of both 'proscription' (in admonishing the use of 'bad' words), and 'prescription' (in promoting free speech). As late social critic Christopher Hitchens pointed out, 'those who call for an extension of rights are also calling for an abridgement of speech'.<sup>47</sup>

At root, political correctness was about civility, equality and respect, and local councils helped to drive it during the late 1980s.<sup>48</sup> Examples of politically correct advances included 'disabled person' for 'crippled' or 'spastic', 'gay person' for 'faggot' or 'poof', 'black person' for 'nigger', and 'sex worker' for 'prostitute'.<sup>49</sup> Beyond appropriacy, 'PC' came to represent another aspect of the complicated relationship between politics and language – or more specifically, semantics. As Hughes has it, political correctness can act euphemistically by avoiding 'direct reference to some embarrassing topic or condition' – 'substance dependence' for 'drug addiction', for instance – and replacing this with a constructed, 'artificial substitution' that is less likely to perform a judgemental function.<sup>50</sup> Read this way, political correctness operated as a cousin to the linguistic tropes I have documented in narrative accounts of child sexual abuse

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<sup>44</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 169.

<sup>45</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>46</sup> Geoffrey Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 7.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, 5, 2.

<sup>48</sup> John Lea, *Political Correctness and Higher Education: British and American Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 159.

<sup>49</sup> Hughes, *Political Correctness*, 10–11, chap. 5 on race.

<sup>50</sup> Hughes, 14.

throughout this thesis, including the regular use of substitute words to create a conceptual distance to horrific crimes. Both phenomena worked to determine the centre of gravity for acceptability. It is therefore somewhat ironic that members of the popular media themselves continued to use metonymical language in order to maintain standards of acceptability, but also intervened in social affairs as a form of unofficial protest against political correctness. The latter was an attempt to restore national life to a nostalgic notion of 'how it once was', when people's lives were not meddled in by the state or politically correct bodies. The conservative press concluded that 'feminists' and 'social workers' that came under fire during the Cleveland, Rochdale and Orkney affairs were 'politically correct' members of the 'Loony Left'.

Interventionist press outlets tended to see readership figures rise; *The Sun* (3.71 million to 3.99 million) and *The News of the World* (5.14 million to 5.36 million) were the only national tabloids that managed to increase their circulations between 1976 and 1987.<sup>51</sup> The major broadsheets increased their readerships (and new outlet *The Independent* boasted 293,000 readers in its first full year, 1987), but other tabloids saw marked decreases amongst an overall circulation decline.<sup>52</sup> Regional newspapers saw figures dwindle, with the top eight titles in 1980 (all with circulations of more than 100,000) dropping by an average of 39,727 copies by 1994 (19.3%).<sup>53</sup> In an extension of mid-1970s trends, one of the major reasons for decline in the newspaper industry was the increasing use of alternative media, primarily television, ownership of which was up from 19.2 million in 1975 to 21.3 million in 1987.<sup>54</sup> Cheap, portable transistor radios also meant that the British could pick up news live and on the

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<sup>51</sup> Justin Fisher, David Denver, and John Benyon, *Central Debates in British Politics* (London: Routledge, 2014), 197.

<sup>52</sup> *The Guardian*, in particular, saw a large rise from 306,000 in 1976 to 494,000 in 1987: Fisher, Denver, and Benyon, 197.

<sup>53</sup> Statistical analysis performed on the *Manchester Evening News*, *Liverpool Echo*, *Glasgow Evening Times*, *The Courier* [Dundee], *The Herald* [Edinburgh], *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Press and Journal* [Aberdeen], *Bristol Evening Post*. Circulation data taken from Great Britain Monopolies and Mergers Commission, *United Newspapers PLC and Fleet Holdings PLC: A Report on the Proposed Transfer of Fleet Holdings PLC to United Newspapers PLC* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1985), 5–16; Colin Seymour-Ure, *The British Press and Broadcasting Since 1945* (Wiley, 1996), 274–76.

<sup>54</sup> 'TV Ownership | BARB', accessed 31 December 2016, <http://www.barb.co.uk/resources/tv-ownership/>.

go, rather than having to wait for morning newspapers.<sup>55</sup> More broadly, a quickening of communication methods meant more immediate media channels to access news and opinion.<sup>56</sup> A critical addition to the ranks of media consumers was the child, as companies and media outlets 'began to see more potential in selling to kids', and were 'taking children far more seriously' by the late 1980s.<sup>57</sup> Alex Wade has commented on the introduction of computers, telephones and televisions into bedrooms in the 1980s, meaning that 'technologies that would once have been restricted to common living spaces' became used in private, and by children.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, parents involved in the Rochdale case argued that it was one child's access to dubious "comics and videos" that led to his "imaginative" accusations of Satanism.<sup>59</sup>

Within this media environment child sexual abuse, in Settle and Bingham's words, had been 'identified as a specific, and important, social problem', and in 1987 several newspapers (and other discursive platforms) represented it directly as such.<sup>60</sup> But for many, Cleveland was not only – if at all – 'about' child sexual abuse. It was about outsiders impinging on everyday life, or child protection, or an attack on the family, or the creeping infringement of the state, or even the devil's work. Groups reflected their anxieties in different ways. In the press, the primary modes were conservatism (through staunch and emotive defences of the family) and stimulation (through feverish, demonological language). In the words of Higgs and Wyatt themselves, writing some years later: 'we believe that some of the public furore which accompanied the crisis was essentially a reaction to child sexual abuse becoming visible'.<sup>61</sup> They imply that their diagnoses incited confusion and anger in the populace: a

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<sup>55</sup> Guy Starkey, 'Radio's Audiences', in *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*, ed. Martin Conboy and John Steel (London: Routledge, 2014), 388.

<sup>56</sup> Philip Norton, *The British Polity* (London: Routledge, 2015), 410.

<sup>57</sup> Juliet B. Schor, 'A Child in Trust: The Content of Commercial Messages in Children's Advertising', in *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (London: SAGE, 2011), 365.

<sup>58</sup> Alex Wade, *Playback – A Genealogy of 1980s British Videogames* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 58, 65.

<sup>59</sup> Ronald Faux, 'Parents Fight for Return of Children after Satanic Tales', *The Times*, 8 September 1990.

<sup>60</sup> Bingham and Settle, 'Scandals and Silences'.

<sup>61</sup> Wyatt and Higgs, 'The Medical Diagnosis of Child Sexual Abuse in Cleveland in 1987: The Paediatrician's Dilemma', 384.

sense of not knowing how to handle a deeply uncomfortable truth, and what that truth meant for family life. This confusion was embodied by *The Sun's* coverage (amongst others), on one day demanding 'Sack the Docs!' within a word border displaying the message 'Kids in crisis', but conversely four days later producing a front-page article that told of a mother's relief at Higgs' intervention: 'Thank God For Dr Higgs!'<sup>62</sup> Inside on the same day, the paper again attacked Higgs, connecting her to a conspiracy of justice: 'Doc in Hush-Up Plot'.<sup>63</sup>

As Mica Nava has pointed out, this showed that newspapers were conflicted, 'accepting that children *are* sexually abused', but also 'express(ing) anxieties about aspects of the Cleveland Social Services response'.<sup>64</sup> One *Daily Mirror* headline – 'What The Hell Is Going on' – suggests this deep confusion: an understanding that child sexual abuse was now a recognised part of life, but of not necessarily wanting to believe or demonstrate this understanding.<sup>65</sup> The Butler-Sloss report, too, acknowledged that 'abuse within the family is the most common form', but refused to address whether or not abuse had actually taken place in Cleveland.<sup>66</sup> As I shall highlight, these dual stances resounded in local press reporting in the North East. Denials related to Cleveland were often forceful. Hilary Armstrong MP, putting it to parliament that 'the majority of those children in Cleveland were abused', was quickly cut off by Richard Holt, MP for Langbaurch in Cleveland: 'They were not'.<sup>67</sup> Nava picks up other examples of denial from individuals such as doctor Michael Toner, speaking to the *Daily Express* in June 1987, who did not 'believe in the avalanche of child abuse suggested by the Cleveland figures'. His comments led off with an attack on "fashionable ... zeal".<sup>68</sup> Similarly, *Daily Telegraph* writer Lesley Garner spoke of child sexual abuse as a "newly fashionable problem". These comments

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<sup>62</sup> 'Sack the Docs!', *The Sun*, 26 June 1987; 'Thank God For Dr Higgs!', *The Sun*, 30 June 1987; courtesy of Nava, 'Cleveland and the Press', 109–10.

<sup>63</sup> 'Doc in Hush-Up Plot', *The Sun*, 30 June 1987.

<sup>64</sup> Nava, 'Cleveland and the Press', 108.

<sup>65</sup> Anton Antonowicz, 'What The Hell Is Going On', *Daily Mirror*, 30 June 1987.

<sup>66</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 4. The Clyde Report on the Orkney episode likewise did not seek to determine whether or not children had been abused.

<sup>67</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 6 July 1988 Vol 136 c1071.

<sup>68</sup> Nava, 'Cleveland and the Press', 107.



suggest that to many, the inconvenient problem of child sexual abuse was *passing* or immaterial. Such stances were couched in a committed defence of the 'mythical', patriarchal family.<sup>69</sup> They also played on wider rejections of 'trendy', politically correct terminologies and behaviours that were proliferating at the same time.

The terms 'paedophile' or 'paedophilia' were displaced from discussions about Cleveland. Partially this was because, as I have argued, the primary focus was not on the *nature* of potential abusers (or if it was, as at Rochdale and Orkney, it was on their 'satanic' characteristics), but whether abuse existed in the first place. But more than this, paedophilia was still very much depicted as an *external* threat (i.e. not an intra-familial concern), despite evidence to the contrary. Take the policeman, talking to the *Daily Mail* in the wake of the Rochdale crisis, who identified not 'the man in the shabby mac who spends hours behind bushes ... (but) the man who targets his victims over days, weeks, months and even a year' as the greatest threat.<sup>70</sup> This threw light on a particular type of sophisticated stranger attacker, rather than one closer to home.<sup>71</sup> Or the doctor who told the same newspaper that "most paedophiles are able to pass themselves off as quite ordinary", ignoring the possibility that paedophiles *were* 'ordinary': that they lived in family settings and abused their own children, or children that they knew.<sup>72</sup> Paedophiles were still viewed as outsiders, and as such were rendered as outsiders to debates about child sexual abuse within the family.

Local press reporting on Cleveland exhibited these often-conflicting characteristics, showing indirect, displaced anxiety and anger on the one hand, and bullish directness that displayed increased knowledge of child sexual abuse on the other. Communication scholar Rasmus Kleis Nielsen has commented that local journalism 'may well be frequently terrible and yet also terribly important', being superficial and advertisement-heavy, playing to elite interests

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<sup>69</sup> Nava, 107–8.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Burden, 'Britain's Dossier of Shame', *Daily Mail*, 8 June 1990.

<sup>71</sup> Today, such targeted behaviour would be referred to as 'grooming', although this phraseology did not come into common usage until the mid-1990s, Anne-Marie McAlinden, *The Shaming of Sexual Offenders: Risk, Retribution and Reintegration* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 86.

<sup>72</sup> Jessica Davies, 'Inside the Mind of a Paedophile', *Daily Mail*, 11 May 1990.

and undermining democratic choice, but also providing local information and tying communities together.<sup>73</sup> This combination is something I observed in my research on four of the major newspapers in the region (*The Northern Echo*, *The Gazette*, *Evening Gazette* and the *Hartlepool Times*). This research reveals regular displacement and metonymical language: saying (and knowing), but *not* saying. The *Hartlepool Times*, to take one example, did not acknowledge the Cleveland affair directly. This could be construed as evidence of absence. But if we look to what was being reported and published in its stead, we find subtle and disparate expressions of anxiety. This echoes themes from the Moors murders, where allusive, displaced language, particularly regarding the physical aspects of child abuse, was widespread. A poem by contributor Kenny Surtees from June 1987 evoked a general atmosphere of fear and uncertainty:

Evil spirits in the cold night air  
Cast shadows on the dark nocturnal walls ...  
Terror prevails so entrenched in your heart  
All that you hear is a haunting sound.<sup>74</sup>

In September, a local church column warned ominously of an invasive and poisonous ‘satanic menace to society’ that was suggestive of the destabilising impact ‘outsiders’ (particularly social workers) had had during the Cleveland crisis: ‘The enemy of the Cross is still at work among the family of humans today’.<sup>75</sup> In July, doctors were spoken of in terms of a ‘conspiracy of silence’, and whilst the medical topic was cancer rather than child sexual abuse, it is not difficult to make the connection from there to the widespread anger the Cleveland community felt towards the medical profession.<sup>76</sup> As I show later, Drs Higgs and Wyatt were also spoken about in terms of ‘conspiracy’ by the national press. Further, an individual quoted in that piece spoke of a ‘cagey’ doctor who ‘used all sorts of medical jargon’, bringing to mind suspicions of the

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<sup>73</sup> Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, ‘Introduction: The Uncertain Future of Local Journalism’, in *Local Journalism: The Decline of Newspapers and the Rise of Digital Media*, ed. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015), 1.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Evil House’, *Hartlepool Times*, 4 June 1987.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Voice of the Church’, *Hartlepool Times*, 17 September 1987.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Doctors Have a “Conspiracy of Silence”’, *Hartlepool Times*, 30 July 1987.

‘fashionable’, ‘jargon’-like RAD test for child sexual abuse.<sup>77</sup> A separate article generally implored ‘society’ to ‘put back the love’ by ‘helping children’ through fostering. A reading of this with a contextual eye on the Cleveland crisis suggests that love – in particular love for children – had been in short supply.<sup>78</sup>

Where the *Hartlepool Times* operated allusively, other local newspapers were more forceful and direct, displaying a resolute spirit of campaigning. The daily *Northern Echo*, published in Darlington, had a long history of investigative campaign journalism, with W.T. Stead serving as its second editor from the age of 22 in 1871 before he joined London’s *Pall Mall Gazette* (1880) and published the “Maiden Tribute” (1885).<sup>79</sup> Stead’s legacy was in evidence in 1987 as the paper made Cleveland its primary concern. In the three weeks from 22 June to 12 July, following the commission of what was to become the Butler-Sloss report, the story was front-page *Echo* news on 80% of publication days.<sup>80</sup> A sign of the weight with which the *Echo* treated the case was the creation of its own logo that was affixed to all articles related to the Cleveland case: ‘Child abuse CRISIS’ (see left image below). This method was replicated a few days later by Middlesbrough’s daily *Evening Gazette*, with an even more emotive logo depicting indignant parents next to the tagline: ‘Give us back our children’ (see right image below).<sup>81</sup> With such devices the *Gazette* – the newspaper closest



<sup>77</sup> ‘Doctors Have a “Conspiracy of Silence”’.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Helping the Children’, *Hartlepool Times*, 17 September 1987.

<sup>79</sup> Owen Mulpetre, ‘The Great Educator: A Biography of W.T. Stead’, W.T. Stead Resource Site, accessed 24 December 2017, <http://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/bio.php>.

<sup>80</sup> Figures taken from statistical analysis of the *Northern Echo* over three-week publication period starting 22 June 1987.

<sup>81</sup> These logos first appeared on the front pages of the *Northern Echo* on 25 June 1987 and *Evening Gazette* on 29 June 1987 respectively.

both geographically and in terms of intervention in the case – effectively acted as the mouthpiece for involved parents and the wider community of Middlesbrough. It had been to the *Evening Gazette* that some of the aggrieved parents involved had turned on 18 June, attending the newspaper's offices having been dissatisfied by answers from doctors at the Middlesbrough Royal Hospital.<sup>82</sup> Local news outlets across the country were in the throes of decline amidst the growth and corporatisation of national titles and the increasing use of alternative media streams, yet here was a struggle for local relevance.<sup>83</sup> In the *Gazette*, the Cleveland case was also front-page news on 80% of publication days over the same three-week period from 22 June.<sup>84</sup> The *Gazette* logo is a clear symbol of the way that those closest to the crisis stood resolutely behind both the individual families involved, as well as the concept of family in a wider sense. The logo implores the return of children, although it is not immediately clear to whom the message is being delivered, suggesting a kind of faceless persecutor of family-oriented community. What comes across is the deep significance of locality, channelled through raw anger and pain.

Although the statistical level of coverage was broadly analogous at a national and local level – and whilst both sets of media tended to frame reporting in a pro-family manner – there were some key differences in language and tone used. The national outlets, particularly the tabloids, tended to take a broader brush approach to the crisis and were more likely to assign blame sweepingly, with talk of 'state abuse' of children, 'conspiracy' and 'liars and cheats'.<sup>85</sup> At a local level, events and themes were represented variously in sober, fearful and defensive tones, with a focus on healing 'family agony' and 'distress', comments on the 'nightmare' being faced by families, and a wish to

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<sup>82</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 149.

<sup>83</sup> See, for analysis of the decline of the newspaper industry since the 1970s, John Hill, *The British Newspaper Industry: The Future of the Regional Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), chap. 7.

<sup>84</sup> Figures taken from statistical analysis of the *Evening Gazette* over three-week publication period starting 22 June 1987. The *Gazette* was published on every day except Sunday.

<sup>85</sup> Anthea Gerrie, 'When the State Abuses Children', *Daily Mail*, 14 December 1987; Gordon Greig, John Woodcock, and Alan Qualtrough, 'The Conspiracy', *Daily Mail*, 30 June 1987; 'Liars and Cheats', *Daily Mirror*, 30 June 1987.

reunite parents with their children – as seen in the *Evening Gazette*'s logo.<sup>86</sup> I highlighted in the Moors murders case study the way that the *Manchester Evening News*, to take one example, abruptly and pointedly withdrew from reporting on the murders trial as soon as the verdict had been announced. This hinted at a weary community wishing to move on and recover from its ordeal. The national tabloids, with their detached bombast, were more likely to linger and draw sweeping conclusions from the events. Similar tropes existed in Cleveland, with the weekly *Hartlepool Times* reporting on no aspects of the case at all in the summer of 1987.<sup>87</sup> *The (Shields) Gazette*, a South Tyneside daily, was also less engaged, with 13% of its front pages featuring the story at the height of the crisis. To look at the ritual sexual abuse saga on the Orkney Islands for comparison, *The Orcadian*'s output in 1991-92, too, used an extremely sober tone. The besiegement of Orkney's community can be seen in headlines such as 'Don't blame us'.<sup>88</sup> One story told of a 'fearful' Orkney father sending his children into 'exile' lest they be 'snatched into care' by social workers.<sup>89</sup> Another indicated worry regarding the potentially 'huge' financial costs of the case.<sup>90</sup> There was also defiance, with MP Jim Wallace stating, the day after the case was thrown out, that 'we must now create an atmosphere where everyone involved can start picking up the pieces and getting on with their lives'.<sup>91</sup> This echoes the stoicism of locals during the Moors trial and at Cleveland.

Nostalgia was strikingly present in my reading of each of the Cleveland region's newspapers: a yearning for the past that appears in sharp focus when set against the pains of the community in 1987, not to mention the wider national nostalgia that Margaret Thatcher had imbued in her reimagining of 'nineteenth-century conservatism'.<sup>92</sup> One front-page headline asked, softly

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<sup>86</sup> Mike Clark, 'I've Got Dossier Of Family Agony', *Evening Gazette*, 6 July 1987; Felicity Stewart and Hilary Clixby, 'Parents Face Sex Abuse Nightmare', *Evening Gazette*, 20 June 1987.

<sup>87</sup> Hartlepool was one of the four major districts of Cleveland. I reviewed each edition of the *Hartlepool Times* in 1987 using the British Library's archival microfiche facilities.

<sup>88</sup> 'Don't Blame Us for Hate Mail, Say South Ronaldsay Families', *The Orcadian*, 30 May 1991.

<sup>89</sup> 'Fearful Father Exiles His Children', *The Orcadian*, 18 April 1991.

<sup>90</sup> 'Huge Bill in Child Care Case', *The Orcadian*, 16 May 1991.

<sup>91</sup> 'Child Abuse Case Thrown Out', *The Orcadian*, 2 May 1991.

<sup>92</sup> Ironically it was also Thatcher's policies that exacerbated economic ills in regions such as Cleveland. See Jim Byatt, *Rethinking the Monstrous: Transgression, Vulnerability and Difference in British Fiction Since 1967* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 2.

hinting at a better time, 'can you remember the way we used to be?'<sup>93</sup> In *The (Shields) Gazette* nostalgic references were also plentiful in June and July 1987: 'Delving into old cinema history'; 'Time changes a stroll down memory lane'; 'All Our Yesterdays - A trip down Memory Lane with The Gazette'.<sup>94</sup> The *Northern Echo* ran a regular feature called 'time traveller' that visited themes and stories from years gone by. Headlines lamented 'old times', with one looking back at the 'year of the fearful summer' – an indirect allusion to the *present* fearful summer.<sup>95</sup> A poem by a local resident Ted Bage asked:

Do you remember years ago,  
of things you often did,  
the greatest days of your life,  
when it was great to be a kid.<sup>96</sup>

The lamenting implication in these examples is that the present day was not a great time to be around in Cleveland – either as an adult or a kid. It serves as evidence of the strong feelings and allusions that abounded in national and local media and public discourses. To categorise representations only in terms of the 'presence' or 'absence' of 'child sexual abuse' would be to elide these complex functions: allusion, nostalgia, pain, fear, and confusion.

## **The Central Child**

Concern regarding child and family was a common thread between many of the era's motifs. Here I outline the nature and roots of that concern, using them to explain the ways in which Cleveland came to embody a debate about the future of the child. I also show how children participated in that debate, with the child's voice an important evidential presence at Cleveland. In literary critic Michael Mason's words, 'the fact that gross sexual assaults are performed on very young children is the crucial background to the events at Cleveland in

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<sup>93</sup> 'Can You Remember the Way We Used to Be?', *Hartlepool Times*, 20 August 1987.

<sup>94</sup> Headlines taken from *The Gazette* on 24 June 1987 and 4 July 1987.

<sup>95</sup> Taken from readings of the *Northern Echo* in June and July 1987; 'Like old times', *Northern Echo*, 22 June 1987.

<sup>96</sup> 'Just Memories', *Hartlepool Times*, 17 September 1987.

1987'.<sup>97</sup> With the growing recognition that such crimes were a widespread occurrence, the child became a major cultural preoccupation in the 1980s: constructed once more as a sexually innocent being, protected and politicised. In his polemical 2004 volume *No Future*, cultural theorist Lee Edelman critiqued the way in which the 'cult of the Child' had 'come to embody for us the telos of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust'.<sup>98</sup> The 1980s were a key moment in this entrenchment, the extent of which can be found in the subtext to Margaret Thatcher's infamous maxim that there 'is no such thing as society' (1987): 'too many children and people have been given to understand "I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!" ... and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing!'<sup>99</sup> Something seldom recognised in Thatcher's remarks is how absolutely tied up they were with the notion of the child: she mentioned 'child', 'children' or 'schoolchildren' no less than 61 times in the course of the same interview.<sup>100</sup> In such ways, the child 'regulated political discourse'.<sup>101</sup> There was a concerted movement in the 1980s to radically alter the constitution and provisions of child protection in a way that had not been seen since the 1880s. This extended – paradoxically given Thatcher's apparent downplaying of the state's role in protection – to government, but could also be seen in the media, academia, social services, and on a global level. That child protection needed to be reinforced was one of the few issues of the 1980s – a sought-after ban on pornography being another – that managed to unite the radical feminist left and the moralist right. In this way the child came to embody, as Edelman has it, 'the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation's good'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Mason, 'Cleveland', 3.

<sup>98</sup> Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 11.

<sup>99</sup> Thatcher, Interview for Woman's Own.

<sup>100</sup> Thatcher.

<sup>101</sup> Edelman, *No Future*, 11.

<sup>102</sup> Edelman, 11.

'Moral eruptions' over the care of children took myriad forms.<sup>103</sup> Cambridge doctor Ivor Mills commented that the new wave of 'video nasties' from the United States, such as rape-revenge film *I Spit on Your Grave*, could induce in a child 'such a state of excitement that the heart begins to beat irregularly, blood stops circulating to the brain and the result is death'.<sup>104</sup> At the national legislative level the 'Gillick Competency' case of 1984-5, initiated by a mother (Mrs Victoria Gillick) who had taken her local authority to court, ruled that children under sixteen years old should be able to take contraceptive advice or treatment from medical professionals without parental consent, provided they were deemed capable by the doctor of consenting to the treatment themselves.<sup>105</sup> In 1969, the Representation of the People Act lowered the age of majority from 21 to eighteen. Such movements revealed a conflict between child protection (which granted rights to the family) and child empowerment (which granted autonomous rights to the child). Harry Greenway MP summed up the complexity by noting in parliament the 'widespread public concern over the right of doctors to prescribe oral contraceptives to girls under 16 at a time when it is vital to strengthen the family unit'.<sup>106</sup> Separately Geoffrey Dickens MP, a persistent voice in parliament on exposing paedophilic behaviour, implored his fellow MPs in the Commons to 'accept that we need legislation to protect our children' that would go beyond the extant Protection of Children Act 1978. Dickens indeed posited his proposed child protection bill as a direct response to PIE.<sup>107</sup>

Feminist groups that had done much to uncover the extent of child sexual abuse through academic research and social activism also sought pathways for future prevention. Examples were the Women's Liberation Conference of 1982 on 'Male Power and the Sexual Abuse of Girls', as well as the

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<sup>103</sup> Jane Pilcher, 'Gillick and After: Children and Sex in the 1980s and 1990s', in *Thatcher's Children?: Politics, Childhood And Society In The 1980s And 1990s*, ed. Jane Pilcher and Stephen Wagg (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 77.

<sup>104</sup> Alwyn W. Turner, *Rejoice! Rejoice!: Britain in the 1980s* (London: Aurum Press, 2010), 280.

<sup>105</sup> 'Gillick Competency and Fraser Guidelines', NSPCC, accessed 1 May 2017, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>.

<sup>106</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 23 October 1984 Vol 65 c546.

<sup>107</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 27 June 1984 Vol 62 Cc1014-6.



provision of rape crisis centres throughout the country.<sup>108</sup> Sociologist academics began to focus their research beyond pure statistical documentation of the reach of child sexual abuse, and into practical, policy-focused measures.<sup>109</sup> In the popular media there was a clear trend towards child abuse awareness and prevention, reflected in Esther Rantzen's BBC programme *Childwatch*, launched in 1986, and the associated telephone counselling service Childline, which received up to 10,000 calls per day.<sup>110</sup> The annual BBC charitable telethon *Children in Need* started in 1980, hosted by Rantzen and Terry Wogan. The amounts raised for the eponymous children grew from £1,000,587 in 1980, to £2,264,398 in 1984, to a huge £21,671,931 by 1989, a figure not matched until 2001.<sup>111</sup> This tallied with wider philanthropic campaigning, seen for example in 1985's elaborate international 'Live Aid' concert that raised £30m in the UK alone for the Ethiopian famine that had started in 1983.<sup>112</sup> Such activity supports a view of the mid-late 1980s as key years in terms of public attention to the plight of the child – if also reflective of growing division and destitution towards the end of Thatcher's time as prime minister that needed additional redress through such private charitable means.

High-profile cases where media attention was a factor also had a 'major impact' on the government in terms of pursuing legislative amendments.<sup>113</sup> This included child deaths where children had been placed under the supervision of social workers.<sup>114</sup> In 1982 Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior issued a government inquiry following historic allegations of child sexual abuse and child prostitution in children's homes and hostels in Belfast. This led to the (Judge William) Hughes Report of 1986, which found that 'the events giving rise to this Inquiry ... can no longer be regarded as exceptional. They must perhaps

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<sup>108</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 45.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Margaret Boushel and Sara Noakes, 'Islington Social Services: Developing a Policy on Child Sexual Abuse', *Feminist Review*, no. 28 (1988): 150–57.

<sup>110</sup> Philip Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992), 167; Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 35.

<sup>111</sup> 'BBC Annual Report and Accounts 1989/90' (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1990), 39.

<sup>112</sup> Andy McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society: A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Hachette UK, 2010), 1–3.

<sup>113</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>114</sup> Examples of child death inquiries included Maria Colwell (1973), Tyra Henry (1984), Jasmine Beckford (1984), Kimberley Carlile (1986) and Doreen Mason (1987).

be recognised as earlier symptoms of a general malaise'.<sup>115</sup> Hughes' report set a template of sorts for future large-scale inquiries into abuse, including Cleveland and Orkney. Ministers in the Department for Health and Social Security had realised by the mid-1980s that there was a worrying gap between the growing number of abuse cases and the professional knowledge of social workers. As such it commissioned a separate inquiry, 'Working Together' (released in the same year as Judge Butler-Sloss' report on Cleveland, 1988), that explored best practice in child protection. This led to the establishment of 'Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPCs) in local authority areas in order to provide training, improve professional knowledge, and give in-depth procedural advice for situations where a child had been, or might be, abused.<sup>116</sup>

All of these arrangements built up to the Children Act 1989, which focused specifically on child protection and ruled that children would be best protected within their own families, but allowed emergency provisions for when a child needed to be taken into independent care.<sup>117</sup> The events in Cleveland certainly had an impact on the family-leaning constitution of the Act, given public outcry over perceived state meddling in the private lives of families. In addressing these concerns, 'the Act sits well with Thatcherite concern over the decline of 'the family''.<sup>118</sup> Nigel Parton, a professor of childhood studies, reflected in 1996 that the Act marked a shift in 'relations and hierarchies of authority between the different agencies involved in child protection'. Yet Parton found that the Act had still 'failed to solve the problem of balancing state intervention with the protection of privacy in these matters', which was the key conflict at Cleveland.<sup>119</sup> John Major's government had followed up the Children Act with the Children Support Agency (CSA) and the Child Support Act, both in 1991, which similarly aimed to 'ensure that parents

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<sup>115</sup> W.H. Hughes, 'Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Children's Homes and Hostels' (Belfast: HMSO, 1986), 342.

<sup>116</sup> Nigel Parton, *The Politics of Child Protection: Contemporary Developments and Future Directions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 77.

<sup>117</sup> 'Children Act 1989', <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>.

<sup>118</sup> Karen Winter and Paul Connolly, "'Keeping It in the Family": Thatcherism and the Children Act 1989', in *Thatcher's Children?: Politics, Childhood And Society In The 1980s And 1990s*, ed. Jane Pilcher and Stephen Wagg (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 29.

<sup>119</sup> Nigel Parton, 'The New Politics of Child Protection', in *Thatcher's Children?: Politics, Childhood And Society In The 1980s And 1990s*, ed. Jane Pilcher and Stephen Wagg (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 43.

honour their legal and moral responsibility to maintain their own children' as far as they were able.<sup>120</sup> In practice, the CSA saw state support for children fall to the extent that the actual value of aid in 1996 was less than it was in 1966, showing the continuing difficulties in balancing the needs of the child against the ideological problem of state intervention.<sup>121</sup>

Amended legislation and activism reflected global anxieties about child abuse. The UK was part of a wider international community striving to define the role of the child and of those responsible for it. In 1984 the Council of Europe (of which the UK was a founder member in 1949) had published recommendations on parental responsibilities that were later echoed in the Children Act 1989.<sup>122</sup> The United Nations produced the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which was ratified in the UK in 1991 to tie in with the Child Support Act of the same year.<sup>123</sup> The difference in tone of these two international statutes echoed the ongoing ideological conflicts in Britain. Where the Council of Europe paper emphasised the important role of parenthood, the UN Convention played on the autonomy and rights of the child. In Britain the NSPCC continued to lead in campaigning for children's rights and protection, and was behind research that revealed a 90% increase in the number of recorded child sexual abuse cases in 1984-5.<sup>124</sup> Several private voluntary organisations lobbied the government on social policy.<sup>125</sup> The National Children's Home (now Action for Children) launched a 'Children in Danger' campaign in 1985 that highlighted social aspects that exacerbated abuse.<sup>126</sup> Elsewhere, the Michael Sieff Foundation was founded in 1984 with an agenda for improving child protection policy; this manifested in regular conferences

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<sup>120</sup> Marilyn Howard, 'Cutting Social Security', in *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, ed. Alan Walker and Carol Walker (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1997), 89.

<sup>121</sup> Howard, 89.

<sup>122</sup> 'Recommendation R(84) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Parental Responsibilities' (Council of Europe, 28 February 1984), <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/family/Rec.84.4.%20E.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> UN General Assembly, 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1989).

<sup>124</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2003), 310; Jason Lee, *Celebrity, Pedophilia, and Ideology in American Culture* (New York: Cambria Press, 2009), 29–30.

<sup>125</sup> Tom White, 'NCH's Children in Danger Campaign', *Children & Society* 1, no. 4 (1 December 1987): 320.

<sup>126</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 310.

attended by leaders in the field.<sup>127</sup> These movements represented a deep concern in childhood rights, care and status that helps to explain the anxieties at Cleveland.

As well as being the subject of intensified protection measures, children were becoming increasingly autonomous cultural and sexual beings, and participated in advertising and media consumption. In 1980, a Calvin Klein advert featuring a 15-year-old Brooke Shields caused controversy, with Shields pictured asking, “Want to know what gets between me and my Calvins? Nothing”.<sup>128</sup> Feminist sociologist Jessica Ringrose notes that the formalisation of discussions of child sexuality occurred with the ‘discursive production of the sexual child’ in the 1970s.<sup>129</sup> At the same time, a growing movement in radical social work and education theory argued for the benefits of increasing youth engagement and of listening to the child – a general shift from ‘being seen to being heard’.<sup>130</sup> This is significant because Cleveland revealed evidence of the child’s own increasing discursive involvement in sexual abuse and social care narratives. This was a presence I did not detect as strongly in the Moors and PIE case studies.<sup>131</sup> The child his or herself, supposedly knowing whether or not they had been abused, became a critical source of evidence – indeed in some cases the *only* source of evidence – in addition to being the initial source of the allegations at Rochdale and Orkney. Doctors and social care practitioners interviewed the children extensively in all three cases.<sup>132</sup> These interviews were highly contentious because of the deployment of ‘leading questions’ that parents

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<sup>127</sup> See for example Edna Llewellyn, ‘Working Together for Children’s Welfare’ (Michael Sieff Foundation, September 1986),

<http://www.michaelsieff-foundation.org.uk/content/1986%20Sep.pdf>;

Edna Llewellyn, ‘Working Together for Children’s Welfare: Effective Intervention’ (Michael Sieff Foundation, 12 September 1988),

<http://www.michaelsieff-foundation.org.uk/content/1988%20Sep.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> Barrie Gunter, *Media and the Sexualization of Childhood* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3.

<sup>129</sup> Emma Renold, R. Danielle Egan, and Jessica Ringrose, ‘Introduction’, in *Children, Sexuality and Sexualization* (New York: Springer, 2016), 2.

<sup>130</sup> See Leonisa Ardizzone, ‘Listening to Youth Voices: Activism and Critical Pedagogy’, in *Useful Theory: Making Critical Education Practical*, ed. Rebecca A. Goldstein (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 49–64; Ann Head, ‘The Child’s Voice in Child and Family Social Work Decision Making: The Perspective of a Guardian Ad Litem’, *Child & Family Social Work* 3, no. 3 (1 August 1998): 189–96.

<sup>131</sup> The Moors coverage was about children who were no longer alive: they simply had no voice. The PIE debates were largely focused not on child victims, but on ‘paedophiles’.

<sup>132</sup> See Clyde Report for an insight into how these interviews were structured, Clyde, ‘Orkney Inquiry’, 4.

felt had been put to the children, with 'social workers ... seen to threaten and attempt to bribe children in order to bring pressure on the children to confirm ... that they had been abused'.<sup>133</sup> In a separate suspected ritual abuse case in Ayrshire (1990), social workers asked children: "Did you kill three or four babies?", "Did you sexually abuse the little boy before you were made to kill it?", "Who ate it?" and "What parts did you eat?"<sup>134</sup> The Cleveland case also led to legislative debates as to whether or not video recordings of such interviews should be admissible as evidence.<sup>135</sup>

The experiences of children were at the heart of the Cleveland controversy. Butler-Sloss noted that 'it was necessary to refer, sometimes in detail to children, their family histories, schools, and on occasions intimate details of their ano-genital region'. She agreed that children's interviews were 'an essential part of the investigation' in which children gave detailed and lengthy accounts of what they had experienced.<sup>136</sup> At Orkney, one girl described sex as 'yucky, ugly, horrible, disgusting', and a church minister at the centre of allegations as a 'cloaked', 'hooded' figure who 'hooked' children into a circle before vaginally and anally raping them: '(he) puts his 'willie' into Maggie's fanny whilst lying down ... (others) dance around'.<sup>137</sup> A 2006 documentary showed that at Rochdale one of the child interviewees 'cried for 17 minutes non-stop while the social worker doesn't let up her barrage of questions'.<sup>138</sup> Investigators interpreted children's voices with adult faculties. Ralph Underwager, an American doctor – and sometime supporter of paedophile rights – was called to give evidence at Butler-Sloss' inquiry and decried the "interrogation tactics" of social workers that "destroyed" children.<sup>139</sup> Lord Clyde, later commenting on his objectives for the Orkney report, also admitted that he did not consider the impact that 'any of the actings which were the

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<sup>133</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>134</sup> Gillian Bennett, *Bodies: Sex, Violence, Disease, and Death in Contemporary Legend* (Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2009), 293.

<sup>135</sup> See debate 'Use of Video Recordings in Criminal Proceedings about Sexual Offences Against Children', 'Hansard, HC Deb 20 June 1988 Vol 135 Cc846-79'. At the time such evidence was not admissible, though police leaders claimed the facility would be 'superb'.

<sup>136</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 170, 204.

<sup>137</sup> Clyde, 'Orkney Inquiry', 29, 31.

<sup>138</sup> 'Satanic Abuse: The Truth at Last', *Manchester Evening News*, 12 January 2006.

<sup>139</sup> Gerrie, 'When the State Abuses Children'.

subject of the Inquiry might have had on any of the nine children involved'.<sup>140</sup> There was often the tendency, therefore, 'to turn what must be at its heart a matter of children's experiences into something centred upon adult perceptions and concerns', as Mason had it on Cleveland, well highlighting the ways that politicians, journalists, medical professionals and social workers dominated the discussions.<sup>141</sup> The child's voice was heavily curated – and some felt artificially instigated – by adults. Nonetheless, the child was undoubtedly *present* in the Cleveland debates, again reflecting its changed cultural and social status. During the 1960s and 1970s, debates about adult abuse of children focused largely on perversion (often homosexuality) and the experiences and actions of adult offenders. There was no comparable case in which the existence of child sexual abuse – and the child's experience of this – was so much in question.

### **Cleveland and the Nuclear Family**

Fears about child sexual abuse, an increase in divorce and associated single motherhood, and the perceived threat of homosexuality led to an emboldened rhetoric in defence of the private, nuclear family by 1987. At Cleveland, the family was buttressed in an emotive and powerful manner by media, politicians and families themselves. I now explore some of the background to this, showing that Cleveland had not been the first case in the UK to 'frame the relationship between state, family and social work'.<sup>142</sup> The Maria Colwell inquiry of 1973 was an important landmark and served to create an adversarial atmosphere between families and social workers.<sup>143</sup> Thatcher had battled for the hegemony of the 'nuclear' family, viewing it as '*the* central social institution' and one that provided comment on the wider 'moral status of the nation'.<sup>144</sup> She argued that 'a nation of free people will only continue to be a great nation if your family life

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<sup>140</sup> Clyde, 'Orkney Inquiry', 4.

<sup>141</sup> Mason, 'Cleveland', 5.

<sup>142</sup> Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 17, 20.

<sup>143</sup> Maria Colwell was a seven-year-old girl murdered by her stepfather in 1973 in Brighton; Nigel Parton, 'From Maria Colwell to Victoria Climbié: Reflections On a Generation of Public Inquiries into Child Abuse', *Child Abuse Review* 13, no. 2 (2004): 80–94.

<sup>144</sup> Jane Pilcher and Stephen Wagg, 'Introduction', in *Thatcher's Children?: Politics, Childhood And Society In The 1980s And 1990s*, ed. Jane Pilcher and Stephen Wagg (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 3.

continues and the structure of that nation is a family structure'.<sup>145</sup> Behind these words was a tacit rejection of homosexuality (her interviewer had just asked whether the AIDS crisis might leave no option other than a 'return' to the morality of one woman and one man in a relationship) that culminated in the notorious 1988 Section 28 addendum to the Local Government Act.<sup>146</sup> This ordered a 'prohibition on promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material' upon local authorities, after controversy over the supposed use of books such as *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin* and *Young, Gay and Proud!* – although such books did not end up in classrooms, and no one was ever prosecuted amidst confused interpretations of the addendum.<sup>147</sup> It took until 2003 for Section 28 to be officially repealed in the UK. The amendment can be read, in legal professor Davina Cooper's words, as 'a response to the entry of oppositional forces onto the terrain of the state through municipal government', a reference to typically Labour-run local bodies and education authorities (such as Haringey Council) that supported supposedly clunky, new-fangled and pro-homosexual views.<sup>148</sup> This tension between central and local bodies is centrally at stake in any analysis of Cleveland.

McSmith argues that Section 28 had 'almost no effect', instead serving to harm the conservative government who were left to appear bigoted.<sup>149</sup> But this elides important factors about the makeup of family life. Section 28 reflected a clear trend towards child protection, and pointed to renewed belief in the nuclear family and hostility towards perceived threats to it. There were demoralising consequences for gay people in Britain in having questions about

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<sup>145</sup> Thatcher, Interview for Woman's Own.

<sup>146</sup> Thatcher.

<sup>147</sup> 'Local Government Act', § 28 (1988), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/section/28>; Susanne Bösche and Andreas Hansen, *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1983); Don Romesburg, *Young, Gay, and Proud!* (New York: Alyson Publications, 1995); Jeffrey Weeks, 'Jeffrey Weeks Reflects on "Sexual Politics in the Era of Reagan and Thatcher"', *NOTCHES*, 12 February 2015, <http://notchesblog.com/2015/02/12/jeffrey-weeks-responds-to-sexual-politics-in-the-era-of-reagan-and-thatcher/>.

<sup>148</sup> Davina Cooper, 'An Engaged State: Sexuality, Governance, and the Potential for Change', *Journal of Law and Society* 20, no. 3 (1993): 260; for an analysis of the Haringey Council controversy see Bob Cant, 'Challenging Heterosexism: The Haringey Experiment, 1986-1987', *NOTCHES* (blog), 9 December 2014, <http://notchesblog.com/2014/12/09/challenging-heterosexism-the-haringey-experiment-1986-1987/>.

<sup>149</sup> McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society*, 7.

the legitimacy of their sexuality, as well as their supposedly corruptive influence on the nation's children, foregrounded by their own government. Councils, libraries and teachers also acted self-censoriously, as they feared reputational damage (and potential prosecution) due to an atmosphere of legal uncertainty.<sup>150</sup> And debates saw a renewal of narratives that conflated homosexuality and sexual violence against children as a threat to family, as summed up in a speech to the Commons by Jill Knight MP: 'millions outside Parliament object to little children being perverted, diverted or converted from normal family life'.<sup>151</sup> In law, the notion of homosexual parenting was rejected by a series of judgements between 1977 and 1991 that saw same-sex couples lose custody battles.<sup>152</sup> In combination with the HIV AIDS crisis, which claimed escalating numbers of casualties up to 1987, British public opinion shifted. The *British Social Attitudes Report* showed that in 1983 62% of those surveyed felt that homosexuality was 'almost' or 'mostly' wrong; this had climbed to 74% by 1987.<sup>153</sup> Section 28, then, had negative effects. But it also acted as a rallying cry for gay community cohesion and achieving a 'very real sense of place in the world' in the 1980s.<sup>154</sup> The influential activist group Stonewall was founded as a direct response amidst a wider mobilisation of gay activism.<sup>155</sup>

Edelman has critiqued the connectedness in political discourse between the 'Child' and the 'Queer', noting that if there is 'no baby' and therefore 'no future', 'the blame must fall on the fatal lure of sterile, narcissistic enjoyments' (or 'queer' activity).<sup>156</sup> Another target of the Conservative Party in this domain had been the 'single mother'. Two months after the Children Act was passed in

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<sup>150</sup> John Vincent, *LGBT People and the UK Cultural Sector: The Response of Libraries, Museums, Archives and Heritage Since 1950* (London: Routledge, 2016), 53–54.

<sup>151</sup> Colin Clews, 'The Road to Section 28', *NOTCHES* (blog), 26 September 2017, <http://notchesblog.com/2017/09/26/the-road-to-section-28/>.

<sup>152</sup> Helen Reece, 'Subverting the Stigmatization Argument', *Journal of Law and Society* 23, no. 4 (December 1996): 484–505; Sarah Beresford, 'Get Over Your (Legal) "Self": A Brief History of Lesbians, Motherhood and the Law', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 30, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 95–106.

<sup>153</sup> Matt Cook, 'Archives of Feeling: AIDS in the UK c.1987 (Inaugural Lecture)' (Birkbeck, University of London, 2016); Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 307.

<sup>154</sup> Colin Clews, *Gay in the 80s: From Fighting Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives* (Leicester: Troubador Publishing Ltd, 2017), 9.

<sup>155</sup> 'Stonewall's History', Stonewall, 10 June 2015, <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/stonewalls-history>.

<sup>156</sup> Edelman, *No Future*, 13.



1989, Thatcher spoke of single-parent families as a 'threat to our whole way of life, the long-term implications of which we can barely grasp'.<sup>157</sup> She also commented on the 'significant proportion' of child abuse that occurred in such households.<sup>158</sup> Referencing conservative familial attitudes, Turner has noted that 'there was a fundamental contradiction [in Thatcherism] in being economically liberal and morally strictured'.<sup>159</sup> The sense of the family and, in turn, the child being at the centre of British life is palpable in the historical record of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which again helps to explain the headline potential of Cleveland. In the wake of supposed sexual change, historians Robert Rotberg and Theodore Rabb stated in 1983 that 'everyone wanted to know what family life was really like in the past. Was there a golden age of the family somewhere out there, or merely a dismal record of male chauvinist tyranny, child abuse, cruelty, economic exploitation, emotional coldness, and sexual frustration?'<sup>160</sup> Reflecting this interest, the *Journal of Family History* launched in 1976, and several books explored the state of the family across historical periods and geographies. These integrated themes such as gender, equality, and work, which matched emerging feminist currents in academia.<sup>161</sup>

The Cleveland crisis acted, in one way, as a proxy skirmish between the two avatars of family and state. Set against a 1980s acceptance that familial child sexual abuse existed, the question became one of whether or not to intervene in domestic sexual abuse if intervening meant damaging the family institution. One of Stuart Bell's primary concerns, in Butler-Sloss' words, was that 'there had been a fundamental attack on family life' at Cleveland.<sup>162</sup> In line with this, the media and politicians used language that heavily indicated the

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<sup>157</sup> Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech at National Children's Home (George Thomas Society Lecture)', (17 January 1990), <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107992>.

<sup>158</sup> Thatcher.

<sup>159</sup> Turner, *Rejoice! Rejoice!*, 230

<sup>160</sup> Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg, *The New History: The 1980s and Beyond* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 54.

<sup>161</sup> See, for example, Louise A. Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978); Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>162</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 164.

threat to family and what this meant for social life. The *Daily Express* wrote of 'family agony', and the *Daily Mirror* contended that 'family life has been struck a devastating blow'.<sup>163</sup> Lesley Garner of *The Daily Telegraph*, writing on the impact of Cleveland, posited that 'few people know what forces are unleashed once society begins to tamper with the mechanics of the family'.<sup>164</sup> Nava, commenting on such arguments from a feminist perspective, wrote that in the press 'the seriousness, the extent, and sometimes even the existence of child sexual abuse are denied. The mythical 'traditional' family, and by implication the role of the father within this – the father as patriarch – is defended'.<sup>165</sup> News reporting, heavily weighted against social workers and in favour of the family, bore this out by focusing on highly emotive family stories. One father who had faced allegations in Cleveland told a local news station that 'I couldn't put a figure on what I would want to compensate me and my family for the heartache and aggravation we've suffered ... I think the greatest compensation that any of us could be given is a personal, face-to-face apology - a public apology'.<sup>166</sup> Other stories played up seemingly cruel aspects of social workers' treatment of parents whose children had been taken into care, such as the Orkney mother who had 'been allowed no contact with her children since last November ... they had not been allowed to have letters, Christmas or birthday cards or presents'.<sup>167</sup> Another *Orcadian* article also focused on undelivered presents and implied that social workers had somehow been culpable for their failed delivery, meaning a ruined family Christmas.<sup>168</sup>

Such coverage during child sexual abuse cases was indicative of the ways that press reporting, politicians, and legislatures (see the Children Act 1989 that nominally awarded families the protective responsibility for their children) created narratives that bolstered the family. But changes also occurred *within* the family in the wake of Cleveland. According to a MORI survey in 1989,

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<sup>163</sup> Respectively, Paul Thompson and David Stoakes, 'Family Agony as Reunion Is Barred in New Abuse Storm', *Daily Express*, 27 June 1987; 'Never Again', *Daily Mirror*, 30 June 1987.

<sup>164</sup> Nava, 'Cleveland and the Press', 108.

<sup>165</sup> Nava, 107.

<sup>166</sup> 'Cleveland Controversy Family to Start Afresh' (TFM, 16 August 1988), <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/segment/0007800213011>.

<sup>167</sup> 'Children's Panel Doesn't Listen Claims Mother', *The Orcadian*, 11 April 1991.

<sup>168</sup> 'Mother Seeks Review', *The Orcadian*, 16 May 1991.

'parents (had) radically altered their behaviour towards their children since' Cleveland, with mothers 'frightened' to leave them alone with male family members, and one in seven parents changing their babysitters.<sup>169</sup> According to Charles Pragnell of Cleveland Social Services, many male parents who had become more involved as direct carers in their children's lives in the early-mid 1980s, including 'bathing and dressing' them, withdrew from these roles amidst a climate of fear.<sup>170</sup> In this way, Cleveland influenced private narratives on and attitudes to childcare and child sexual abuse, as well as public ones, and epitomised the tension at the heart of 1980s debates: that the nuclear family was at once the most nurturing and the most dangerous of spaces for a child.

### **Child Sexual Abuse Awareness**

Because one of the central questions of the Cleveland affair was whether or not children had actually been abused, the child's body became a contested space for discussion – in often quite graphic ways – in legal and media discourse. Where reactions in Britain to the PIE episode tended to frame the abuser as a predatory, homosexual stranger, Cleveland was one of the first high-profile cases that occurred in the context of new understandings and narratives: that the vast majority of abuse happened largely within families, at the hands of heterosexual men who were very often related to their victims. Put another way, communities were becoming more aware of incest, even if they did not always describe it as such. One 1984 study at London's Hospital for Sick Children (now Great Ormond Street Hospital) showed that of 56 referred child sexual abuse cases, only one involved an assailant who was not known to the victim.<sup>171</sup> I have argued that the 'paedophile' was first socially constructed in Britain in the popular media as a direct response to PIE's paedophile-positive activism. Views of the abuser that had been constructed during that episode were entrenched and then reordered in the years before Cleveland. The number

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<sup>169</sup> Graham Dudman, 'Parents in Fear after Cleveland Abuse Row', *Daily Express*, 23 May 1989.

<sup>170</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

<sup>171</sup> See, for an example of increasing medical professional acceptance, May Duddle, 'Help For The Child Who Is Sexually Abused', *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition)* 289, no. 6456 (1984): 1399–1400.

of references to 'paedophilia' in parliamentary discussions in the 1980s was twice that of those in the previous decade, and gradually there was a diversification in its use away from descriptions only of PIE members or critics.<sup>172</sup> 'Paedophilia' was no longer perceived to be just about sexual attraction to boys, even if depictions of homosexuals as predatory abusers of boys did remain common, notable in the Clause 28 debates.

In the 1980s the prevailing voices on abuse and abusers were those of (broadly feminist) activism and research, and associated and concerted political and media concern. These voices argued that the prevalence of child sexual abuse was far greater than first thought, with somewhere in the region of 30-40% of females and 13% of males having been abused as children.<sup>173</sup> Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), in which protagonist Celie is subjected to incestual rape, was one literary example of incest's prominence in the cultural consciousness.<sup>174</sup> Kitzinger correctly notes that the decade was one of 'dramatic shifts in the public profile of sexual, particularly incestuous, abuse'.<sup>175</sup> Cleveland was a hugely significant moment in – and contributor to – the linguistic and conceptual crystallisation of the issue, particularly amongst politicians and the press.<sup>176</sup> Geoffrey Dickens MP, a leading anti-PIE campaigner, summed up the cultural change when imploring the Commons to 'remember the reaction in the House 10 years ago, when I warned of the spread of child abuse. I was greeted with disbelief, but we now know differently'.<sup>177</sup> The period continued to see more direct media engagement with the concept of child sexual abuse than had been the case in prior decades. It serves as a marker for open discussion on child sexual abuse, manifest in the extremely high frequency of daily media coverage in 1987-88. In parliament the Minister for Health Tony Newton, commenting on Cleveland, accepted that 'it is extremely important that if there

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<sup>172</sup> 21 in the 1980s; 11 in the 1970s. Figures drawn from the *Hansard* Parliamentary archive

<sup>173</sup> See contextual chapter for summary; statistics from Rebecca M. Bolen, Diana E.H. Russell, and Maria Scannapieco, 'Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence: A Review and Re-Analysis of Relevant Studies', in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 169.

<sup>174</sup> Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

<sup>175</sup> Kitzinger, *Framing Abuse*, 36.

<sup>176</sup> Ashenden says that 'child sexual abuse became a fully fledged public issue in Britain as a result of events in Cleveland', Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 20.

<sup>177</sup> 'Hansard, HC Deb 10 May 1990 Vol 172 c407'.

appears to be a case of child abuse it should be carefully and sensitively investigated'.<sup>178</sup> By 1988, journalists were acknowledging that Cleveland marked a 'remarkable period in the social history of the country'.<sup>179</sup>

Louise Armstrong, author of the 1978 exposé of incest *Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, argued later that the level of professional interest in abuse amounted to an 'incest industry', in which 'a staggering array of clinicians and counsellors and therapists and researchers and authorities and experts' sharpened their focus.<sup>180</sup> Yet in Britain, policy guidance was in short supply.<sup>181</sup> Medical care professionals in particular struggled to combat the growing levels of reported abuse within families. In the mid-1980s, British doctors accepted that processes for coordinated treatment were thin, lagging far behind those in North America, with 'adequate strategies for its management either non-existent or only just evolving'.<sup>182</sup> They also began to note the accompanying dilemmas that went with treating victims of incest, with one assessment in the *British Medical Journal* from 1984 noting that the doctor 'may consider that the damage to the child will be worse if he reports the case to the police – and sadly his fears may be accurate'.<sup>183</sup> Another paper from the same journal (May 1987) argued that 'the general reaction to the sexual abuse of children is even greater than that engendered by physical abuse, and the emotional consequences of misdiagnosis are thus likely to be more severe'.<sup>184</sup>

These accounts suggest hesitancy, and throw light on the new and uncomfortable positions doctors felt themselves to be in when diagnosing abuse. Sue Richardson, child abuse consultant in Cleveland from 1986 (and during the 1987 crisis), later noted that doctors and social workers had

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<sup>178</sup> 'Hansard, HC Deb 29 June 1987 Vol 118 c255'.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Davenport, 'Children Failed by Every Care Agency', *The Times*, 7 July 1988.

<sup>180</sup> Louise Armstrong, 'What Happened When Women Said "Incest"', in *Home Truths About Child Sexual Abuse: Policy and Practice*, ed. Catherine Itzin (London: Routledge, 2000), 27–48.

<sup>181</sup> Lucy Delap, 'Child Welfare, Child Protection and Sexual Abuse, 1918-1990', *Historical Child Sex Abuse (History & Policy*, 30 July 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/child-welfare-child-protection-and-sexual-abuse-1918-1990>.

<sup>182</sup> See, for example, N. J. Wild, 'Sexual Abuse Of Children In Leeds', *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition)* 292, no. 6528 (1986): 1113; Duddle, 'Help For The Child Who Is Sexually Abused', 1400.

<sup>183</sup> Duddle, 'Help For The Child Who Is Sexually Abused', 1399.

<sup>184</sup> Susan E. Handfield-Jones, F. R. J. Hinde, and C. T. C. Kennedy, 'Lichen Sclerosus Et Atrophicus In Children Misdiagnosed As Sexual Abuse', *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition)* 294, no. 6584 (1987): 1405.

traditionally been reliant on the child to make a complaint of sexual abuse before any action was taken by care professionals. The overturning of this approach led to confusion between roles and showed up the lack of central instruction available.<sup>185</sup> Prevention and identification of abuse at an early stage were therefore thought by doctors to be the best cure. Not only were post-abuse therapeutic measures for victims very limited, but early identification would in theory help to avoid professional care dilemmas and the kind of clashes between police, families and doctors seen in Cleveland. One such identification method was 'reflex anal dilatation' (RAD), used extensively by Higgs and Wyatt in their diagnoses at Cleveland (but first established as a test in 1935).<sup>186</sup> Lucy Delap has noted that the RAD test had been 'recommended as a standard diagnostic', but the consternation it produced after Cleveland meant that it came to be seen as a negative symbol of the medical profession's struggle to contain child sexual abuse.<sup>187</sup>

At the very start of her report of the inquiry Butler-Sloss gave an unrestricted account of the forms and nature of child sexual abuse that were known to exist, detailing for instance '*exposure*', '*molestation* – fondling of genitals', '*sexual intercourse* – oral, vaginal or anal', '*rape* – acute assaultative forced intercourse', 'digital penetration, fondling, mutual masturbation, anal and oral/genital contact'.<sup>188</sup> In this way Cleveland stood out from previous major inquiries such as the Jasmine Beckford and Kincora Boys Home reports of the mid-1980s, where in each the introductory focus stretched only to administrative and local backgrounds.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, in an echo of the PIE affair, the Hughes Report on Kincora continually and blankly referred to the abuse supposedly inflicted on the young boys as 'homosexual', rather than

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<sup>185</sup> Olivia O'Leary, 'Cleveland', *The Death of Childhood* (Channel 4, 1997), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoNM8TujAI4>.

<sup>186</sup> Delap, 'Child Welfare'; Ashenden, *Governing Child Sexual Abuse*, 11; G S Clayden, 'Reflex Anal Dilatation Associated with Severe Chronic Constipation in Children.', *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 63, no. 7 (July 1988): 832.

<sup>187</sup> Delap, 'Child Welfare'.

<sup>188</sup> Butler-Sloss, 'Cleveland Report', 6.

<sup>189</sup> Louis Blom-Cooper, 'A Child in Trust: The Report of the Panel of Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Jasmine Beckford' (London: London Borough of Brent, 1985); Hughes, 'Report of the Committee'.

'paedophilic' or with reference to 'child sexual abuse'.<sup>190</sup> By 1988, in the wake of Cleveland, discussion was more explicit. Sir Eldon Griffiths commented on the 'extensive and evil' problem, informing the Commons of a case involving a three-year-old girl who was abused by her step-father, "gobbling her and her gobbling him", with him "pretending to f... [sic] her", and another two-year-old 'baby' who said during a visit to her grandmother: "Don't touch me like daddy does"; 'she then gave a graphic description of her father putting his fingers into her vagina and anus'.<sup>191</sup> The Clyde Report on Orkney represented abuse through verbatim, unsettling accounts of the children involved: 'she spoke of one of her brothers putting his 'dick' beside her 'fanny', saying that it had been stiff but had not been inside her ... QW indicated that she had been hurt in the vaginal area by 'John's dickie'.<sup>192</sup> The erratic, inconsistent use of inverted commas suggests the author's discomfort and distance. Whilst these are challenging accounts to read, I reproduce them to show that unequivocal commentary on child sexual abuse existed – and also to highlight the use of the child's voice.

When journalists and politicians discussed the nature of the controversial RAD procedure, as they did at length, they were also (like the test) looking at the nature of abuse itself: whether it existed, and what it was physically like. Critic Michael Mason depicted the RAD test in an article for the *London Review of Books*, exhibiting forthright anatomical descriptions of 'dilatation of the inner sphincter', 'external sphincter' and what happens 'when the buttocks are parted'.<sup>193</sup> National newspapers also reported on RAD and gave an account of the professional career of Higgs, in particular, that led to her using it.<sup>194</sup> Meanwhile, medical publications took up the debate, with a 1988 article concluding that severe constipation might show up the same signs – and with them, erroneous diagnoses – as child sexual abuse in a RAD test.<sup>195</sup> Many doctors spoke to prominent press mouthpieces to either defend or castigate

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<sup>190</sup> Hughes referenced, for example, 'homosexual misconduct by the staff', Hughes, 'Report of the Committee', 34.

<sup>191</sup> 'Hansard, HC Deb 20 June 1988 Vol 135 c847'.

<sup>192</sup> Clyde, 'Orkney Inquiry', 29.

<sup>193</sup> Mason, 'Cleveland', 4.

<sup>194</sup> Davenport, 'Children Failed by Every Care Agency'; 'The Doctors: Higgs' Unshakeable Convictions Caused Unnecessary Distress', *The Times*, 7 July 1988.

<sup>195</sup> Clayden, 'Reflex Anal Dilatation Associated with Severe Chronic Constipation in Children.'

their colleagues Higgs and Wyatt.<sup>196</sup> In 1989, eleven paediatricians wrote to medical journal *The Lancet* to state their belief that 90% of the Cleveland cases had been successfully diagnosed after all.<sup>197</sup> The *British Medical Journal* published a series of somewhat fraught articles between 1988 and 1990 that showed the painful impact of Cleveland on the medical community; it also revealed a readiness to contribute to the public debate.<sup>198</sup> Cleveland was clear evidence of increased awareness of both the seriousness of child sexual abuse as well as its direct expression in anatomical and medical language across contexts.

### **Demonisation of Social Workers and Doctors**

Reactions to Cleveland revealed an extraordinary inversion: social workers and doctors – those there to protect and assist children – were represented, effectively, as child abusers. This inversion is one of the most striking features of 1987-1991 reporting on Cleveland and other headline abuse cases. This section of the chapter shows that these demonological themes were visible throughout the 1980s, in Conservative government provisions against homosexuals, welfare scroungers and single mothers, and increasingly against the social workers of the Labour Party-supporting ‘Loony Left’.<sup>199</sup> I spend some time setting out the characteristics of social and care provision under Thatcher, as a means of explaining reactions to those issues at Cleveland. I argue that ‘demonisation’

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<sup>196</sup> See for example Ralph Underwager, who spoke to the Butler-Sloss inquiry; Jayne Wynne, another doctor who utilised the RAD test; Raine Roberts, a Manchester-based police surgeon who was fiercely critical of RAD; and James Phillips, who argued that Higgs and Wyatt ‘underestimated’ the actual levels of abuse: Gerrie, ‘When the State Abuses Children’; ‘I May Quit – Abuse Doctor’, *Daily Mail*, 13 April 1988; Philip Webster and Jill Sherman, ‘Police Surgeon Attacks Cleveland “Whitewash”’, *The Times*, 3 August 1988; Thomson Prentice and Peter Davenport, ‘Higgs and Wyatt May Have Underestimated Sex Abuse’, *The Times*, 20 February 1989.

<sup>197</sup> Prentice and Davenport, ‘Higgs and Wyatt May Have Underestimated Sex Abuse’.

<sup>198</sup> See, for example, Clare Dyer, ‘After Cleveland’, *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 297, no. 6657 (1988): 1149–50; Bernard Valman, ‘Implications Of The Cleveland Inquiry: Child Sexual Abuse Demands Cooperation’, *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 297, no. 6642 (1988): 151–52; D. P. Addy, ‘Why Shoot The Messenger?’, *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 299, no. 6693 (1989): 268–268; Clare Dyer, ‘Dr. Marietta Higgs And The Wit Of Man’, *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 299, no. 6707 (1989): 1064–65.

<sup>199</sup> James Thomas, *Popular Newspapers, the Labour Party and British Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007), 91.



was a consequence of some of the legislative and social provisions that Thatcher's governments had constructed since 1979, and which were in most cases utilised to buttress the institution of the family. To 'demonise' is defined by the *OED* as to 'portray as wicked and threatening: *he was demonized by the right-wing press*'.<sup>200</sup> There were demonising aspects to the way that media spoke about three (sometimes overlapping) groups in particular at Cleveland: social workers, doctors, and women. Families, the press and politicians often portrayed each group as monsters – and even abusers.

Political shifts had marginalised the state and its workers, in particular social and healthcare professionals, in the build-up to Cleveland. In a 1983 television interview, Thatcher argued for 'a Britain where people are freer to act, ... where they're less burdened by the state'.<sup>201</sup> Not being burdened by the state, however, also meant that people could not rely upon it for welfare.<sup>202</sup> In legislative terms, the Department of Health and Social Security administered a reduction in social security, manifest in the Social Security Act of 1986.<sup>203</sup> Child benefit was frozen, adversely shaping the experiences of women and their children in particular.<sup>204</sup> Free eye tests for all were abolished by 1988, a move described in parliament by Labour MP Alice Mahon as a 'disastrous decision' that illustrated 'the government's real intention towards the national health service'.<sup>205</sup> Care provision itself was redistributed through 'care in the community', a form of deinstitutionalisation that encouraged care of the elderly and disabled within family homes, rather than in state institutions.<sup>206</sup> Such provisions were part of a wider trend towards the privatisation and commoditisation of care, 'as universal entitlements to welfare gave way to

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<sup>200</sup> 'Demonise', *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>201</sup> Brian Walden, 'The Resolute Approach', *Weekend World* (ITV, 16 January 1983), <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=105087>.

<sup>202</sup> See, for example, Alan Walker and Carol Walker, 'Introduction', in *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, ed. Alan Walker and Carol Walker (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1997), 1–16; McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society*, 9; Graham Stewart, *Bang!: A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013), chap. 14.

<sup>203</sup> A restructure in 1988 saw the creation of two separate departments: the Department of Health, and the Department of Social Security.

<sup>204</sup> Jane Millar, 'Gender', in *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, ed. Alan Walker and Carol Walker (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1997), 106.

<sup>205</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 22 April 1991 Vol 189 c876.

<sup>206</sup> Community care had been discussed in Britain since the 1950s. Millar, 'Gender', 106.

individualistic rights to, and choice of, services'.<sup>207</sup> In this *laissez-faire* context, 'family, self-help, NGOs, but especially .... the market' were projected as superior to a 'morally debilitating' state dependency.<sup>208</sup> In social work, this translated to a system of 'New Public Management' (NPM) through which 'neo-liberal ideas, policies and practices were introduced into the public sector generally'.<sup>209</sup> Thatcher's government broke from socially democratic fiscal policies and instigated an economic turn from state to individual and public to private. No wonder, then, that NHS and social workers were already in a vulnerable and uncertain position heading into Cleveland.

Before this, the social work profession had prospered in the 1970s with a largely radical agenda in a more collectivist, welfare-driven Britain.<sup>210</sup> The British Union of Social Workers launched as a trade union in 1977, and the journal *Community Care* (1974-) 'flowered' with a readership in the tens of thousands.<sup>211</sup> Historian David Burnham shows a snapshot account of 1970s social work. Opening the door to two females, a client remarked that they "could be bleedin' twins": with 'matching duffle coats, CND badges and fingerless gloves [and] their tinny French cars parked nose to nose; [they were] the classic image of radical seventies social workers'.<sup>212</sup> Social work students at universities including Birmingham, which had the largest social services department in the UK, 'lived through a series of radical and contrasting changes'. They acquired diplomas, masters degrees or four-year degrees influenced by radical counter-culture texts such as Roy Bailey and Michael Brake's *Radical Social Work* (1975, revised 1980).<sup>213</sup> To critics, radical social

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<sup>207</sup> Alex Mold, 'Making the Patient-Consumer in Margaret Thatcher's Britain', *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 2 (2011): 509.

<sup>208</sup> Walker and Walker, 'Introduction', 6.

<sup>209</sup> Iain Ferguson, "'Another Social Work Is Possible!' Reclaiming the Radical Tradition', in *Theories and Methods of Social Work: Exploring Different Perspectives*, ed. Vesna Leskošek (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, 2009), 89.

<sup>210</sup> Mark Lymbery, *Social Work with Older People: Context, Policy and Practice* (London: SAGE, 2005), 45.

<sup>211</sup> John Pierson, *Understanding Social Work: History and Context* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education UK, 2011), 139.

<sup>212</sup> David Burnham, *The Social Worker Speaks: A History of Social Workers Through the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2016), 147.

<sup>213</sup> Ann Davis, 'Celebrating 100 Years of Social Work: University of Birmingham', *The Social Work History Network*, 2008, 17, <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/IASS/100-years-of-social-work.pdf>.

workers were the 'Loony Left' – Marxist middle-class professionals who made the workings and injustices of social class a central tenet of their work.<sup>214</sup> As the government drove towards deinstitutionalised community care in the 1980s, though, the profession 'foundered'. At the centre of this was the fundamental shift in the nature of social work – from 'direct' care to facilitative or 'managerialised', target-driven care.<sup>215</sup>

In parallel, social work also suffered politically from a series of failings in high-profile child deaths across the 1970s and 80s.<sup>216</sup> In Burnham's view, the case of Maria Colwell in 1973 started to 'damage the reputation' of the profession; by 1983, following further damaging cases, social workers had noticed a step up in seriousness regarding child sexual abuse reporting: "it was as if a lightbulb had gone on".<sup>217</sup> These twin moves towards increased childcare provision and 'personal social services, administered by the local authorities' came to shape discussions on Cleveland in 1987, where direct conflicts developed between individuals and social services.<sup>218</sup> Social workers were the object of concerted hostility, ostensibly because of the perception that they had effected the incorrect removal of children from their families. They faced virulent language, constant low-level criticism, and legal threats. With censure being orchestrated by local MP Stuart Bell, social work department heads were labelled "LIARS AND CHEATS" by a *Daily Mirror* headline.<sup>219</sup> Underwager, the US doctor called to the Cleveland inquiry, protested to the *Daily Mail* about social-work 'moralists' and 'zealots', and warned of 'total destruction' for the individual. The headline to this interview referred, eye-catchingly, to 'state abuse' as the descriptor for what had happened to children and families.<sup>220</sup> At Rochdale, meanwhile, social workers were variously adjudged to be 'obsessed by satanic abuse', accused of 'ignoring parents and children', and guilty of

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<sup>214</sup> Pierson, *Understanding Social Work*, 147.

<sup>215</sup> Lymbery, *Social Work with Older People*, 45, 48, 50, 48.

<sup>216</sup> Steve Rogowski, "The Rise and Fall of Social Work?", *Policy Press Blog* (blog), 28 October 2010, <https://policypress.wordpress.com/2010/10/28/the-rise-and-fall-of-social-work/>.

<sup>217</sup> Burnham, *The Social Worker Speaks*, 155, 161.

<sup>218</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 298.

<sup>219</sup> 'Liars and Cheats'.

<sup>220</sup> Gerrie, 'When the State Abuses Children'.

making 'dreadful mistakes'.<sup>221</sup> In Orkney, Reverend Morris MacKenzie (the figure at the centre of the allegations of satanic ritual abuse) compared social workers to the Gestapo, decried their actions as 'worse than a witch hunt', and called for them to be sacked.<sup>222</sup> They also received 'personalised hate mail', sent directly to the Orkney Islands Council.<sup>223</sup> *The Times*, witheringly, commented that 'almost no one except the social work department could believe that ritual sexual abuse was taking place on South Ronaldsay'.<sup>224</sup> Sharon Crossley from the Orkney Parents Action Committee said on a radio interview with LBC, that 'probably people will be resigning from their jobs. I can't see that they can carry on after this'.<sup>225</sup>

The reputation of social workers had become so toxic that comedian Alexei Sayle decided they would be an apt maiden subject for his satirical BBC sketch show:

Of course, we can't blame social workers for all of society's ills,  
but this much is true: they're all a bunch of namby-pamby  
vegetarian do-gooders who make you want to *throw up*!<sup>226</sup>

Sayle's sketch riffed on the way that social workers had come to stand in for all the ills of the nation. Demonisation of social workers at Cleveland reflected a wider suspicion of their role and input to social life. Such was the extent of the damage to Cleveland's social services that incoming director Mike Lauerman, speaking after Butler-Sloss' inquiry, conceded that "it is difficult to describe to an outsider the atmosphere of fear and intimidation that surrounds the subject of child sexual abuse in Cleveland".<sup>227</sup> In one case involving a father accused of

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<sup>221</sup> Ronald Faux, 'Rochdale Workers "ignored Rules" on Child Abuse Cases', *The Times*, 10 November 1990; Peter Victor, 'Judge Says the Lessons of Cleveland Case Not Heeded', *The Times*, 20 September 1990; Ronald Faux, 'Horror Film Fantasy Led to a Year of Anguish for Parents', *The Times*, 8 March 1991.

<sup>222</sup> Brian Swanson, "'Sack Them" Call', *Daily Mirror*, 5 April 1991.

<sup>223</sup> 'Don't Blame Us for Hate Mail, Say South Ronaldsay Families'.

<sup>224</sup> South Ronaldsay was the Orkney island on which abuse allegations initially surfaced, Kerry Gill, 'Ritual Fears Taken to Heart', *The Times*, 5 April 1991.

<sup>225</sup> 'Orkney Child Abuse Scandal' (London Broadcasting Company, 4 April 1991), <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandrado/lbc/index.php/segment/0004200522011>.

<sup>226</sup> Alexei Sayle, 'Alexei Sayle's Stuff' (BBC 2, 13 October 1988), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmIjFykua\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmIjFykua_0).

<sup>227</sup> David Mitchell, 'Cleveland Re-Referrals Rise amid Claims of Intimidation', *Community Care*, 11 May 1989.

abusing his daughter, no social worker could be found to investigate the case.<sup>228</sup> Cleveland's social services staff members were still 'banned' from speaking in public about child abuse in 1989 under threat of disciplinary action or sacking.<sup>229</sup> In these ways, the demonisation of social workers became self-perpetuating, with staff unwilling or unable to fulfil their core duties. Reputational damage in Cleveland fed into the wider national picture of a profession already in 'disarray'.<sup>230</sup>

Doctors involved in the Cleveland diagnoses – namely Marietta Higgs and Geoffrey Wyatt – faced demonisation just as severe. Stuart Bell, using parliamentary privilege, accused them of 'colluding and conspiring' with social workers to keep police away.<sup>231</sup> The *Daily Mail* supported Bell in his campaign, running a provocative article headlined 'The Conspiracy' at the height of events.<sup>232</sup> The same newspaper implored Higgs to 'DEFEND YOUR METHODS'.<sup>233</sup> Other tabloids such as *The Sun* were even more straightforward: 'Sack the docs!'<sup>234</sup> This echoed the wishes of many of the families, with one father asking for Higgs' 'dismissal and removal from this area' during an interview with the local TFM radio network.<sup>235</sup> Twelve Cleveland families went further still, threatening to sue Higgs and Wyatt citing 'assault, negligence, false imprisonment ... defamation' and 'conspiracy'.<sup>236</sup> The effects of this criticism reached widely into the medical profession, with doctors in other parts of the country also facing reproof. A national parents advocacy group, Parents Against Injustice, called for a full inquiry into practices in Leeds, where Higgs first studied the RAD test under doctors Jayne Wynne and Christopher Hobbs.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> 'Cleveland Father Wins Access Rights', *Social Work Today*, 1 September 1988.

<sup>229</sup> Derek Heptinstall, 'Cleveland Staff Incensed at Ban on Child Abuse Talk', *Social Work Today*, 1 June 1989.

<sup>230</sup> Lymbery, *Social Work with Older People*, 50.

<sup>231</sup> Respectively, Antonowicz, 'What The Hell Is Going On'; and Peter Hildrew, 'Child Abuse Doctor "Did Not Collude"', *The Guardian*, 25 September 1987.

<sup>232</sup> Greig, Woodcock, and Qualtrough, 'The Conspiracy'.

<sup>233</sup> *Daily Mail* article courtesy of O'Leary, 'Cleveland'.

<sup>234</sup> 'Sack the Docs!'

<sup>235</sup> 'Dr Higgs Fights for Professional Future Following Cleveland Child Sex Abuse Scandal' (TFM, 1 March 1989), <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/segment/0001700400026>.

<sup>236</sup> Tom Sharratt, 'Families to Sue Cleveland Child Abuse Doctors', *The Guardian*, 15 December 1987.

<sup>237</sup> Martin Wainwright, 'Parents Urge New Abuse Inquiry', *The Guardian*, 11 April 1988.

Wynne threatened to quit her job, claiming to be 'the victim of a witch-hunt' and facing "intolerable pressure".<sup>238</sup>

The *Daily Mirror* ran an article in April 1991 on Orkney, claiming of the children that 'They left here unharmed THEY'RE COMING HOME ABUSED'. One of the parents stated that "our children have never been abused until they left this house. But now they will come back to us abused".<sup>239</sup> This was not simply a feature of the tabloid press, even if broadsheets pursued this line of reporting in a more moderated fashion. *The Times*, in an interview with Cleveland's social services lead Michael Bishop, claimed that children had 'suffered the most extreme physical distress' as a result of being 'subjected to as many as five painful medical examinations' at Middlesbrough General Hospital.<sup>240</sup> Amongst this emotive language is the implication that it was medical *examinations*, rather than the supposed abuse itself, that caused 'the most extreme' distress for children. Bishop felt "very concerned that the gathering of evidence of abuse has indeed become the source of additional abuse".<sup>241</sup> Elsewhere, social workers were described in similar ways to how paedophiles had been portrayed since the 1970s. David Mellor, Minister of State for Health, told social services directors during their annual conference that "you are showing the people out there that there is a peculiar inwardness about this particular kind of activity".<sup>242</sup> One social worker declared of her colleagues that they were 'getting too close' to the children.<sup>243</sup> By being framed as strange, peculiar, and dangerous, social workers were tagged with many of the same associations as paedophiles, who themselves had been labelled 'curious and distasteful' and 'nutcases' by politicians.<sup>244</sup>

Social workers also actively contributed to the discourse of demonisation, and were perceived by families, in particular, to be persecutors

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<sup>238</sup> 'I May Quit – Abuse Doctor'.

<sup>239</sup> Anna Smith and Julia Clarke, 'Cruel Legacy of Orkney Kids Taken from Their Families', *Daily Mirror*, 5 April 1991.

<sup>240</sup> Ian Smith, 'Agony of Children Trapped by Dispute over Sexual Abuse', *The Times*, 13 August 1987.

<sup>241</sup> Smith.

<sup>242</sup> Peter Davenport, 'Mellor Angered by Cleveland Decision', *The Times*, 22 October 1988.

<sup>243</sup> 'Orkney Workers Barred', *The Times*, 10 September 1991.

<sup>244</sup> 'Hansard, HL Deb 05 May 1978 Vol 391 Cc535-80'; Rhodes Boyson, Paedophile conference, interview by Peter Spencer (Unconfirmed), London Broadcasting Company, 1977.

themselves, and worthy of fear.<sup>245</sup> Of David Mellor, Cleveland's senior assistant director of social services William Walton said that "I think his attitude has been diabolical", showing that the press did not have a monopoly on devilish language.<sup>246</sup> At a conference, Mellor 'was accused of mounting a vendetta and a witch hunt' against social workers, echoing the same language that was used to describe social workers and doctors themselves.<sup>247</sup> Bell, meanwhile, was 'savagely attacked' and 'hissed' at during a social workers' conference.<sup>248</sup> Feminist activist Beatrix Campbell, who argued that the true levels of abuse had been underplayed during and after the Broxtowe (Nottinghamshire), Cleveland and Rochdale cases in particular, wrote an article on Bell posing the question 'Champ or chump?' in the headline; her critical analysis implied that the latter label was the correct one.<sup>249</sup> These examples reveal how sections of the social worker population and their supporters demonised those on the other side of the argument. They also show that journalists, in reporting these critiques, continued to portray social workers as demonic, inhuman figures, capable of 'savage' attacks and 'hissing', or of taking children away in one of the 'dawn raids' that has always appeared to hold such fascination in the press.<sup>250</sup>

The majority of the 'demonised' individuals were women. Nava, describing women's treatment as 'a massive and violent seizure of misogyny', picks out an article from the *Daily Mail* that shows how sections of the press projected the disputes in Cleveland as a gender battle, with women (Higgs and social worker Sue Richardson) depicted on the top of the page as 'the doctor ... and the social worker', and men (Bell and Dr Alistair Irvine) on the bottom as the logical, gravitas-heavy 'politician' and 'police surgeon': safe pairs of hands.<sup>251</sup> The treatment of Higgs in the tabloid press shares strong themes with that given to Myra Hindley in 1966 (quite apart from the coincidence of their shared initials 'MH'). Grainy black and white images of Richardson and Higgs on

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<sup>245</sup> 'Fearful Father Exiles His Children'.

<sup>246</sup> Tom Sharratt, 'Cleveland Social Services Find MP "Diabolical"', *The Guardian*, 19 September 1987.

<sup>247</sup> Davenport, 'Mellor Angered by Cleveland Decision'.

<sup>248</sup> 'Delegates Hiss MP at Centre of Child Abuse Affair', *The Guardian*, 30 September 1987.

<sup>249</sup> Beatrix Campbell, 'Champ or Chump?', *New Statesman*, 15 July 1988.

<sup>250</sup> 'Classroom Raid "Very Unlikely"', *The Orcadian*, 18 April 1991.

<sup>251</sup> Nava, 'Cleveland and the Press', 119, 116.

the front page of the *Daily Mail*, alongside 'The Conspiracy' headline, are redolent of those reserved by the *Daily Mirror* for Brady and Hindley the day after their murder convictions (see below).<sup>252</sup> There were also similarities in the way the articles were textually framed. Brady and Hindley are 'partners in murder', whilst Richardson and Higgs were 'a hospital consultant and a woman social worker' who 'conspired' with each other. The use of 'woman' as a modifier to describe Richardson suggests that her gender was somehow an intrinsic part of her wrongness. As with Hindley, the Cleveland inquiry seemed to cause particular shock amongst the press because it involved women who had supposedly abdicated their gendered responsibility for protecting children.

3 38  
'Calculated, cruel murders,' says judge

# Daily Mirror

44. Saturday, May 7, 1966 No. 19,399

## BRADY AND HINDLEY GO TO JAIL FOR LIFE

By MURDER REPORTERS

**PARTNERS in murder** Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were both jailed for life at the end of the Bodies on the Moors trial yesterday.

Brady, 29, was found guilty of three murders—which meant three life sentences. Hindley, 25, was convicted of two murders—which brought her two life sentences.

When the verdicts were read last night, "a person sentenced to life imprisonment is liable to be released for the whole of his or her natural life," said the Home Secretary, the power to release such a person is vested in the Home Secretary.

**VERDICT**—In the morning of 11 January 1966, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were found guilty of the murders of three young boys and a girl, and of the attempted murder of a fourth child.

**IMPASSIVE**—The pair showed no emotion as they were sentenced to life imprisonment. Brady, who had been charged with the murders of the three boys, and Hindley, who had been charged with the murders of the three boys and the girl, both looked calm and collected.

**Boys**—The three boys were aged 10, 11 and 12. They were all from the same family. The girl was aged 11 and was also from the same family.

**Promises**—The judge said that the pair had been given every opportunity to plead guilty and to accept a reduced sentence. But they had refused to do so.

**Watery beer upsets an MP**—A water supply problem in the north-east of England has caused a local MP to complain. The MP said that the water supply was so poor that it was impossible to drink.

**Helping**—A new scheme has been launched to help the unemployed. The scheme will provide training and financial assistance to those who are unemployed.

**IAN BRADY**  
Three concurrent sentences of life imprisonment for what the judge called "three calculated, cruel, cold-blooded murders."

**MYRA HINDLEY**  
Two concurrent sentences of life imprisonment for what the judge called "two equally horrible murders . . . and seven years as an accessory."

# THE CONSPIRACY

By GORDON GREIG, JOHN WOODCOCK and ALAN QUALTROUGH

**A HOSPITAL consultant and a woman social worker conspired to exclude police from child sex abuse investigations in Cleveland, an MP claimed yesterday.**

Stuart Bell's allegations against Dr Marietta Higgs and Mrs Sue Richardson were "red last night by the news."

**Helping**—The scandal the Mail revealed to the nation.

**Dr Higgs and Mrs Richardson . . . conspired to keep police out of allegations of sexual abuse**

MP STUART BELL YESTERDAY

**ACCUSED: Social worker Sue Richardson**

**ACCUSED: Consultant Dr Marietta Higgs**

The domestic allegations against Higgs and Mrs Richardson were "red last night by the news."

One aspect of the demonic discourse was deep displeasure with what families and media perceived to be outside interference in local family life. Although social services were administered locally, the doctors and social workers most heavily involved in the removal of the children were middle-class professionals not native to the area, engendering a climate of resentment.<sup>253</sup> On the other hand, families involved were from working-class, economically

<sup>252</sup> Greig, Woodcock, and Qualtrough, 'The Conspiracy'; 'Brady And Hindley Go To Jail For Life', *Daily Mirror*, 7 May 1966.

<sup>253</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.



deprived backgrounds; a theme of division was palpable.<sup>254</sup> Any feeling of central state intrusion seems ironic, given that Thatcher had vowed to reduce exactly that. Yet some commentators and scholars have argued that there was no paradox; privatisation did not equal a 'zero-sum' weakening of the state, but in fact a tightening manoeuvre that awarded the state new authority and powers.<sup>255</sup> Marwick argues that Thatcher's 'philosophy of encouraging independence appeared more like a philosophy of perpetuating deprivation'.<sup>256</sup> Although Thatcherism ostensibly cast aside geographical and class strictures in favour of social mobility, the reality was that division became entrenched during the 1980s.<sup>257</sup> This brought 'pauperisation and misery', leaving a 'chasm' between rich and poor, and an increase of those living in poverty from 5m people in 1979 to 14m in 1993.<sup>258</sup> The UK became a more unequal society between 1979 and 1991, with the share of net income going to the top 10% of the population rising from 21% to 27%. Net income going to the poorest 10% dropped from 4% in 1979 to 2% in 1991. Where London boomed, many regions were 'losing political and economic leverage ... enjoyed since the Industrial Revolution'.<sup>259</sup> The rich became richer and the poor became poorer.<sup>260</sup> Class divisions were not done away with but consolidated and then exacerbated.

An article in the *Northern Echo* from July 1987 showed that the 'North' had high unemployment rates, low household incomes, poor diet and health, high crime, high illegitimacy rates among young mothers, and below-average wages.<sup>261</sup> Cleveland was one of the depressed, deindustrialised areas, following the marked decline of the steel and shipping industries since the 1970s.<sup>262</sup> It was therefore fertile ground for a 'transgressive' narrative of 'incomers' and

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<sup>254</sup> Brian Page, 'The Way We Are', *Northern Echo*, 2 July 1987.

<sup>255</sup> Hector E. Schamis, *Re-Forming the State: The Politics of Privatization in Latin America and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 7; Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism* (Springer, 1988), chap. 2.

<sup>256</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 299.

<sup>257</sup> Quote by Margaret Thatcher in Walden, 'The Resolute Approach'.

<sup>258</sup> Walker and Walker, 'Introduction', 3–9.

<sup>259</sup> Andy Beckett, *Promised You A Miracle: Why 1980-82 Made Modern Britain* (London: Penguin UK, 2015), 10.

<sup>260</sup> Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack, 'A More Unequal Country?' (Poverty and Social Exclusion, 16 April 2013), <http://www.poverty.ac.uk/editorial/more-unequal-country>.

<sup>261</sup> Page, 'The Way We Are'.

<sup>262</sup> Pragnell, 'The Cleveland Child Sexual Abuse Scandal'.

‘outsiders’. At Cleveland, families, politicians and the press built an impression of a proud working-class community besieged by outsiders – middle-class, non-local and interfering. As Nava has highlighted, Stuart Bell was ‘indigenous: a northerner, local, son of a Durham miner; salt of the earth, populist’; the *Daily Mail* wrote that he reacted to news of children being removed from their families by declaring: ‘this is Middlesbrough not Russia’.<sup>263</sup> As for Dr Higgs, she was female, foreign (she hailed from Australia, with a German mother and Yugoslav father), and middle-class – ‘an outsider in Cleveland’. She was also ‘unconventional in her domestic arrangements – her husband looks after the home and children’.<sup>264</sup> As such, given her involvement in removing children from their homes, she was a target for defenders of local and family traditionalism and cohesion. At Orkney, meanwhile, it was the four families at the centre of abuse allegations who were middle-class ‘English newcomers’, from a mixture of Jewish, Quaker and Presbyterian faiths, although the majority of locals rallied with them against the threat to community from *another* outside source – social workers.<sup>265</sup> Such divisive, demonising narratives revealed feelings of blame, fear and uncertainty in mass child sexual abuse panics. Those narratives persist today, as I shall explore in the epilogue to this chapter.

### **Medicine, Memory and the Occult**

This final section deals with the intersection of medicine, memory, and occultist cultural trends and shows how these issues bled into representations of Cleveland. Such movements corresponded directly to cases at Rochdale and Orkney, and I use those cases as comparators here. I find that even Cleveland, which was not purported to contain ‘ritual’ abuse, was often still represented with reference to ritual or satanic elements. Movements in psychological diagnostics and treatment were contributors to child sexual abuse panics, particularly those that focused on multiple personality and recovered memory.

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<sup>263</sup> Nava, ‘Cleveland and the Press’, 116–17.

<sup>264</sup> Nava, 117.

<sup>265</sup> Kerry Gill, ‘Surviving a Satanic Slur’, *The Times*, 6 April 1991; Jill Parkin, ‘Community Divided by Suspicion’, *Daily Express*, 7 March 1991; Paul Massey, ‘Master of an Island Universe’, *The Times*, 25 July 1992.

In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) proffered the first clinical definition of ‘multiple personality disorder’ (MPD) (now more commonly referred to as ‘dissociative identity disorder’ (DID)).<sup>266</sup> This detailed an individual’s lack of connection (to the self or to others) as ‘a disturbance or alteration in the normally integrative functions of identity, memory, or consciousness’, often caused by the repression of traumatic memories formed in childhood, including sexual abuse.<sup>267</sup> Repressed memory was not a new concept; Freud had published research on dissociated memory and hysteria in 1896.<sup>268</sup> But where before 1980 there had been only 200 documented cases of MPD in the United States, by 1986 this figure was 6,000.<sup>269</sup> The Canadian book *Sybil* in 1973, and its television serialisation in 1976, documented the life of Shirley Ardell Mason and her supposed 16 personalities – and came to be heavily criticised by many in the psychiatric profession.<sup>270</sup> In the UK, debates over dissociation moved more slowly but were drawn out in parallel to the increase in child abuse understanding.<sup>271</sup>

One of the major controversies of *repressed* memory was that it engendered *false* memory. The key question, as psychologist Cheryl Karp put it in 1995, was: ‘how accurate is a long-buried memory once it resurfaces?’<sup>272</sup> A central text in this debate was teacher and student duo Ellen Bass and Laura Davis’ *The Courage to Heal* (1988), which set out to provide a ‘guide’ for female survivors of child sexual abuse. The book’s fundamental message to its readers was that in order ‘to heal from child sexual abuse you must believe that you were a victim, that the abuse really did take place’; it therefore offered support

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<sup>266</sup> See for commentary on this Cheryl L. Karp, ‘The Repressed Memory Controversy’, *Family Advocate* 17, no. 3 (1995): 70–71.

<sup>267</sup> Background and quotation in Richard P. Kluft, Marlene Steinberg, and Robert L. Spitzer, ‘DSM-III-R Revisions in the Dissociative Disorders: An Exploration of Their Derivation and Rationale’, *Dissociation* 1, no. 1 (March 1988): 39.

<sup>268</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Heredity and the Aetiology of the Neuroses* (London: Read Books Ltd, 2014).

<sup>269</sup> David Aaronovitch, ‘Ritual Sexual Abuse: The Anatomy of a Panic (Part 1)’, *Analysis* (BBC Radio 4, 31 May 2015), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05vx63j>.

<sup>270</sup> Flora Rheta Schreiber, *Sybil: The True Story of a Woman Possessed by Sixteen Separate Personalities* (London: Penguin Books, Limited, 2013) Older examples that represented ‘dissociative disorder’ were novels *The Bird’s Nest* (1954), *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957), *Psycho* (1959), and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). The latter had a cultural revival in the 1970s and 1980s through film and 16 new book editions.

<sup>271</sup> Robert W. Rieber, *The Bifurcation of the Self: The History and Theory of Dissociation and Its Disorders* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2006), 1.

<sup>272</sup> Karp, ‘The Repressed Memory Controversy’, 70.

on how to restore submerged, traumatic memories.<sup>273</sup> Critics of the book decried Bass and Davis' unspecialised view of memory and argued that their work served to bring out false memories of child sexual abuse.<sup>274</sup> In response to the growing profile of repressed memory syndrome, a counter-movement argued for the existence of 'false memory syndrome' (FMS).<sup>275</sup> This became a political dance. Whilst opponents of FMS saw it as a means of silencing vulnerable girls and women who had survived child sexual abuse and wanted to tell their stories, sceptics have argued in the years since that the 'evidence for repressed memories of trauma – or even for repression at all – is surprisingly weak'.<sup>276</sup> Social care professionals at Cleveland, Rochdale and Orkney were indeed accused of 'implanting' memories of abuse into the minds of young children.<sup>277</sup>

The final case study in *The Courage to Heal* focused on an alleged case of satanic ritual abuse, which became a significant feature of debates around false memory in the UK. The direct roots of this lay in Canadian psychologist Lawrence Padzer's book *Michelle Remembers* (published in 1980 in the US and 1981 in the UK). In the book Padzer documented years of alleged abuse suffered by one of his patients (Michelle Smith) at the hands of a coven of Satanists that included members of her own family.<sup>278</sup> The book, in the words of Philip Jenkins, 'drew attention to the developing idea of ritualised child abuse, explicitly suggesting that the violent cults involved in the exploitation of children were satanic in nature'.<sup>279</sup> Three large UK conferences were held on the issue of ritual abuse between April and September 1989 in Reading, Harrogate and Dundee, signalling a growing interest in the topic.<sup>280</sup> At one of these, a

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<sup>273</sup> Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (London: Random House, 2002), 86.

<sup>274</sup> See for example Elizabeth F. Loftus, 'The Reality of Repressed Memories', *American Psychologist* 48 (1993): 518–37.

<sup>275</sup> Bennett, *Bodies*, 292.

<sup>276</sup> Richard J. McNally, *Remembering Trauma* (Harvard University Press, 2005), 16.

<sup>277</sup> Bill Thompson and Andy Williams, *The Myth of Moral Panics: Sex, Snuff, and Satan* (London: Routledge, 2013), 199.

<sup>278</sup> Lawrence Padzer and Michelle Smith, *Michelle Remembers* (New York: Congdon Lattes, 1980).

<sup>279</sup> Philip Jenkins, *Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 195.

<sup>280</sup> Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain*, 169.

delegate expressed her belief that more than 4,000 children were being sacrificed each year in the UK.<sup>281</sup> Organisations were established to help support victims of ritual abuse (one example being the Ritual Abuse Information Network Society, or RAINS), and the NSPCC distributed a guideline on *Satanic Indicators* to social workers in 1989, with signs and symptoms said to include 'an unusual preoccupation with urine and faeces, fear of ghosts and monsters, aggressive play, and the child being "clingy"'.<sup>282</sup> These movements were representative of a wider and growing interest in horror and the occult. Consumption of popular movies such as 'slasher films, occult or possession films, and rape-revenge films' grew.<sup>283</sup> The word 'satanic' itself was a constant in the British news, as the Iranian government placed a *fatwa* on Salman Rushdie following publication of his book *The Satanic Verses* (1988). An 'explosion in critical scrutiny' of playwright Arthur Miller in the 1980s was particularly marked by revived attention to his play about the Salem witch trials (in an anti-communist 20<sup>th</sup>-century context), *The Crucible* (1953).<sup>284</sup>

At a time of increasing secularisation, language that referenced Satanism, witches or the occult was particularly striking – as well as redolent of reporting during the Moors murders trial.<sup>285</sup> The impact was particularly visible during cases that centred specifically on claims of satanic ritual abuse. Tabloids played up the most dramatic aspects. At Orkney, there were reports of a 'hooded and cloaked' 'Sex Master', and between that case and Rochdale the press made a catalogue of references to Satan, ghosts, graveyards, slaughtered animals and babies, and magic substances, amongst others.<sup>286</sup> Reporting on a case from Epping Forest, Essex, the *Daily Express* wrote of 'A SOBBING schoolgirl ... forced to take part in ritual child murders and cannibalism'. The descriptions seem

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<sup>281</sup> J.S. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Tales of Satanic Abuse in Contemporary England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>282</sup> Rosie Waterhouse, 'Satanic Cults: How the Hysteria Swept Britain', *The Independent*, 16 September 1990.

<sup>283</sup> Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 5.

<sup>284</sup> Stephen Marino, *Arthur Miller - Death of a Salesman/The Crucible* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9.

<sup>285</sup> See, for analyses of secularisation since the 1960s, Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2013); Clive D. Field, *Secularization in the Long 1960s: Numerating Religion in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>286</sup> See, for example, 'Sex "Master" Named', *Daily Mail*, 4 September 1991.

deliberately chosen to maximise the effect of gore ("Fountains of blood" spurted'), terror ('killings also took place on a bed at her home while the satanists hummed loudly'), transgressive sexual elements ('naked devil worshippers queued to gang-rape her and her sister'), and ritual strangeness ('She and her sister had to dance naked ... round a forest fire').<sup>287</sup> The deep forest setting added to the arcane nature of the case. Newspapers had applied similar topographical focuses in describing Brady and Hindley's 'windswept' moors. The use of alliteration – 'babies were slaughtered on a sacrificial stone during satanic sex sessions', or "Sonny sometimes cut a leg off ... Sometimes he would make us take a bite of this ... I wanted to spit it out but I was scared. I swallowed it" – also contributed to a sense of horror.<sup>288</sup> Other outlets were more rudimentary in their depictions, referring crudely to unfortunate characters such as the *Daily Mirror*'s 'Satan girl, 10'.<sup>289</sup>

In a special 1991 episode of *After Dark* (*After Rochdale*), sociologist Bill Thompson critiqued the reproduction and interpretation of such language by both the press and social workers, pointing out that these words had largely come from the mouths of children, and that it was adults who interpreted their statements and stories and imbued them with disturbing meanings.<sup>290</sup> This was so, and coverage of specific satanic ritual abuse cases integrated easily with a wider adult culture of demonology in Britain – the conferences on ritual abuse, hobbyism relating to the occult, the demonisation of homosexuals and single mothers – that I explore in this chapter. Even Cleveland, which did *not* contain satanic or ritual elements, was described with allusions to those themes. Some examples of this – David Mellor being labelled 'diabolical'; the 'hissing' social workers at a conference – are noted previously. When Stuart Bell published a book – some say self-promotingly – just one year after the Cleveland case broke, he chose to name it *When Salem Came to the Boro* (the 'Boro' being

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<sup>287</sup> Joe Wood, 'I Saw Ritual Baby Killings Sobs Girl, 10', *Daily Express*, 16 November 1991.

<sup>288</sup> Wood.

<sup>289</sup> "My Hell by Satan Girl, 10", *Daily Mirror*, 15 November 1991.

<sup>290</sup> Don Coutts, 'After Rochdale', *After Dark* (Channel 4, 9 March 1991), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13oYJ5V0VOM>.

Middlesbrough).<sup>291</sup> Such a title provocatively invoked the Salem ‘witch hunts’ of 1690s Massachusetts in order to attach a sense of blamelessness to the Cleveland families. Butler-Sloss decried Bell’s input as ‘intemperate and inflammatory’ in her 1988 report, but by then it was clear that narratives of witch-hunting, witchcraft, satanism and demonism were deep-rooted at Cleveland, and beyond.<sup>292</sup>

Gallows humour often served as relief from these ‘satanic’ dialogues. During the Rochdale inquiry proceedings at Manchester High Court, Justice Douglas Brown provided ‘light’ courtroom moments in his retelling of a six-year-old boy’s ‘increasingly improbable stories of ghosts, killing in graveyards, and of magic drinks that gave the ability to fly. “Don’t forget ... anything you want to know, ask me,”’ the boy had said, presenting himself, comically, as an expert on such occult matters.<sup>293</sup> In parliament, as the Commons discussed Satan worship and associated child abuse, Dennis Skinner MP thought he had spotted a prime suspect: ‘Mr. Speaker, who wears a wig and is all in black’.<sup>294</sup> At Orkney, journalist Jill Parkin of the *Daily Express* encountered island wit when interviewing a local resident who challenged the allegations: “who would be brave enough to take their clothes off on South Ronaldsay on a winter’s night, let alone caper about for a few Satanic rites?”<sup>295</sup> BBC Scotland launched an award for the journalist adjudged to have written ‘the biggest load of rubbish’ about the Orkney Islands in 1991-92, *The Times*’ punch line being that ‘there will be a shortlist of considerable length’.<sup>296</sup> Humour was another way of dealing with – of speaking about – unnatural or uncomfortable themes and situations. This chimes with Sigmund Freud’s assessment of humour at difficult moments as an ‘uplifting’, ‘scornful’ triumph of the pleasure principle, ‘which is here able to assert itself against the disfavour of real circumstances’ and to lift anxiety.<sup>297</sup> The examples above may also be seen as a betrayal of a genuine

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<sup>291</sup> Campbell claimed that Bell was seeking to become ‘a legend in his own time’, Campbell, ‘Champ or Chump?’; Bell, *When Salem Came to the Boro*.

<sup>292</sup> Butler-Sloss, ‘Cleveland Report’, 168.

<sup>293</sup> Faux, ‘Horror Film Fantasy Led to a Year of Anguish for Parents’.

<sup>294</sup> ‘Hansard, HC Deb 10 May 1990 Vol 172 c408’.

<sup>295</sup> Parkin, ‘Community Divided by Suspicion’.

<sup>296</sup> Kerry Gill, ‘BBC Pokes Fun at Tall Tales of Island Life’, *The Times*, 28 August 1992.

<sup>297</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Penguin Freud Reader* (London: Penguin UK, 2006), 562, 563.

sense of scorn at the likelihood of such abuse existing: as noted earlier, refusals to believe the true extent of child sexual abuse were common amongst politicians and journalists. This, too, echoes Freud's theory that jokes can be conscious or unconscious 'manipulations', used to occlude or substitute disturbing truths (such as abuse).<sup>298</sup>

In the years since 1991, the likelihood of the existence, prevalence, or impact of satanic or otherwise ritual sexual abuse of children has been amply and heatedly disputed in depth, although overall scientific or legal confidence in its existence has overall been greatly diminished.<sup>299</sup> But between 1987 and 1991 satanism was somehow a more recognisable or tangible threat than the familial child sex abuser. A Quentin Cowdry article in *The Times* at the time of the Rochdale crisis picked up on this, arguing that 'the "satanism" linked to various child abuse scandals might be a cover for more conventional paedophilic activity'.<sup>300</sup> Similarly, Libby Purves of the same newspaper felt that 'there may be dreadful grains of paedophile truth' behind the 'excitement' of satanic ritual abuse stories.<sup>301</sup> These journalists recognised their profession's metonymical habits, and unpicked deeper motivational forces. These were not new forces, as my two previous case studies suggest. They had been at play as far back as *fin de siècle* fears over decline of the British Empire and degeneration that spawned Gothic novels such as Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). When socially or culturally integral totems are threatened, dark imagery builds up that unseen, intangible threat.<sup>302</sup> English scholar Jim Byatt has argued in his study on monstrosity that

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<sup>298</sup> See, for example, Richard T. Gray, 'Economics as a Laughing Matter: Freud's Jokes and Their Relation to the Economic and Rhetorical Unconscious', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88, no. 2 (1 April 2013): 97–120.

<sup>299</sup> See for example Tim Tate, *Child Pornography: An Investigation* (London: Methuen, 1990); Beatrix Campbell, 'Listen To The Children', *Dispatches* (Channel 4, 1 October 1990), <https://vid.me/KTzl>; Tim Tate, *Children for the Devil: Ritual Abuse and Satanic Crime* (London: Methuen, 1991); Campbell, *Unofficial Secrets*; La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Tales of Satanic Abuse in Contemporary England*; McNally, *Remembering Trauma*; Jean Sybil La Fontaine, *The Devil's Children: From Spirit Possession to Witchcraft: New Allegations That Affect Children* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009); Aaronovitch, 'Ritual Sexual Abuse'.

<sup>300</sup> Quentin Cowdry, "'Satanic' Practices Difficult to Prove', *The Times*, 13 September 1990.

<sup>301</sup> Libby Purves, 'Plagued by Dark Satanic Ills', *The Times*, 18 March 1991.

<sup>302</sup> See, for discussions of degeneration in Victorian Britain, Part III of Daniel Pick, "'Terrors of the Night": Dracula and "Degeneration" in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Critical Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (December 1988): 71–87; Daniel Pick, 'The Degenerating Genius', *History Today*, April 1992;



the notion of the monstrous is as prevalent now as it was in earlier ages when the world was understood through superstition rather than rationality ... Britain [subscribes] to pre-rational and counter-rational attitudes toward the cultural other.<sup>303</sup>

In this way, metonymical, displaced language and demonisation went together at Cleveland, Rochdale and Orkney – that is to say, demonic and satanic narratives (such as Bell's 'witchcraft') were configurations of other social fears: paedophilia and child sexual abuse. These fears related to the disintegration of the family and the future of the child, both of which were central to social, cultural and political debate and change.

## Conclusion

In the end, Cleveland showed that it was not just about *whether* the British loved their children, as *After Dark* had it – but how they should love them, and who should be responsible for them. The kernel of the Cleveland affair was the child and its position between family and state. I have documented and unpicked the diffuse narratives and linguistic forms that were used during the Cleveland crisis of 1987 by media, legislatures, politicians and families involved in the drama. Far from arriving unannounced, Cleveland occurred against a complex backdrop of social and cultural upheaval, involving swingeing Conservative governmental changes, mutable notions of family and the child, and movements in medical and sexual thought. I do not formatively attach the term 'child sexual abuse' to the Cleveland affair in the same way as I did 'paedophilia' to PIE in the previous case study, the difference being that 'paedophilia' – certainly as a verbal construct – had not yet attained popular usage until the PIE affair. Instead, in exploring the way that Cleveland was represented, I find echoes, advances and reversals of prior trends in the longer narrative of adult sex with children. By 1987, child sexual abuse had greater structural and definitional foundations in media and political debates than in

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Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, C.1848-1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 153–240.

<sup>303</sup> Byatt, *Rethinking the Monstrous*, 3.

the mid-1970s. Cleveland gave a large thrust to these narratives. Yet measures and means of processing child sexual abuse were still often rudimentary, if not totally lacking. This manifested in displacements, denials, obfuscation and demonisation, particularly in press language. Social care and medical workers were often the subject of attacks that linguistically mirror attacks on paedophiles. This tells us that the child sexual abuser has not had a monopoly on being 'othered'; rather, *anyone* who is perceived as a threat to the child – and hence to the family, or the 'future', to borrow Edelman's concept – may be portrayed as abusive, abnormal, and threatening. The Cleveland debates also showed that 'paedophilia' continued to be associated in the media with homosexuality and 'stranger danger', rather than the familial abuser. Media and political language forms reveal a struggle to come to terms with the realisation that abuse was broadly a domestic matter, and being such, critically connected to the question of responsibility for the child.

Although the child's voice is present in the historical testimony of Cleveland, it was often lost – or ignored – amidst fraught discussions during the key moments themselves. Butler-Sloss commented on how the child's best interests had not therefore been served during these debates.<sup>304</sup> There was a culture of fear and bitterness during the years 1987-1991. Given that this occurred on both sides of the debate – social workers and family – Michael Mason has pointed out an 'ironical common ground: ... out of a concern for the child which was probably just as strong on both sides of the dispute, each perceived the other as atrociously misguided'.<sup>305</sup> The feminist left has continued to critique the nuclear family and the ongoing damage being done to children as a result of familial abuse. A ten-year retrospective *Channel 4* documentary on Cleveland asked 'why, after a decade of upheaval ... are families better protected than the children who grow up within them?'<sup>306</sup> A 2017 *New Yorker* article, meanwhile, has it that 'we've arranged our world around the fundamental

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<sup>304</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 310.

<sup>305</sup> Michael Mason, 'Denying Dolores', *London Review of Books* 12, no. 19 (11 October 1990): 6–7.

<sup>306</sup> O'Leary, 'Cleveland'.

principle that the state doesn't intrude on the family'.<sup>307</sup> Specific concern about Cleveland continues to be in evidence, with arguments appearing in book publications, television and radio documentaries and online debates. At the centre of these has been the question of whether or not children were abused to the extent alleged in Cleveland in 1987.<sup>308</sup> In parallel to this, similar discussions have proceeded on the topic of whether or not satanic ritual abuse occurred in Rochdale, Orkney, and other environments. Those in either camp portray the others, reductively, as 'deniers' and 'believers'. The period is an important historical moment in the relationship between abuse and memory, and particularly relevant today given the ways in which historical sexual crimes are being 'remembered' with a wider social lens.

A 2015 radio documentary on sexual abuse by journalist David Aaronovitch led him into a heated online discussion with one of his contributors. Tim Tate accused Aaronovitch of producing a 'deceitful' 'conspiracy theory', and highlighted the need for children to be taken seriously where they had made accusations – however outlandish the abuse cases may sound. Aaronovitch pointed out Tate's apparent lack of credibility, having had a book withdrawn for legal reasons, and implied that he had been guilty of 'unfathomable stupidity'.<sup>309</sup> Aaronovitch also directed his ire at contributor Beatrix Campbell, who had previously appeared on a 1991 episode of *After Dark* that focused on the Rochdale abuse case, and regularly argues that ritual abuse was more widespread than commonly believed. Aaronovitch disclosed that Campbell's long-term partner was one of the social workers from another case in Broxtowe, Nottinghamshire: 'one of the two or three principal protagonists in this dispute'.<sup>310</sup> One of Campbell's co-panellists on the *After Dark* child abuse

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<sup>307</sup> Larissa MacFarquhar, 'The Separation: When Should a Child Be Removed from His Home?', *The New Yorker*, 7 August 2017, 42.

<sup>308</sup> There has also been concern about child prostitution in Middlesbrough and Cleveland in the twenty-first century; this was discussed at a conference chaired by Beatrix Campbell in 2003. See 'Charity Warning on Child Prostitution', 4 September 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tees/3079628.stm>.

<sup>309</sup> Tim Tate, 'A Response To BBC Radio 4's Analysis Programme', *The Needle* (blog), 2 June 2015, <https://theneedleblog.wordpress.com/2015/06/02/an-response-to-bbc-radio-4s-analysis-programme-by-tim-tate/>; David Aaronovitch, 'Satanic Abuse: A Reply to Believers', *Barrister Blogger* (blog), 5 July 2015, <http://barristerblogger.com/2015/07/05/satanic-abuse-a-reply-to-believers/>.

<sup>310</sup> Aaronovitch, 'Satanic Abuse'.

episode of 1987, feminist Germaine Greer, confirmed in a television interview in the wake of writing a 'pederastic book' (*The Boy*), that in her opinion 'a woman of taste is a pederast — boys rather than men'.<sup>311</sup> For one thing, this is evidence of the way in which actors reappear variously in different historical child sexual abuse narratives. These exchanges also show how commentators on abuse can become entangled, to a personal and subjective degree, in discussions about the likelihood and nature of appalling abuse. But I argue that in focusing only on such 'headline', *prima facie* arguments – indeed, in engaging somewhat *childishly* – these discussions omit the nuanced ways that child sexual abuse narratives have been configured. Cleveland marks a compelling moment in this process, because of the complex and multidimensional ways that it was and continues to be constructed, represented and interpreted in parliament, the press and beyond. Textured, contextual issues – none more central than the fate of the symbolic and real child – played out between an array of 1980s groups, factors, and events. In this way, Cleveland encapsulated many of the critical themes of 1980s Britain: economic, political, social, sexual, domestic and medical.

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<sup>311</sup> Ian Pace, 'Germaine Greer's Apologia for Child Abuse', *Desiring Progress* (blog), 27 June 2014, <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2014/06/27/germaine-greers-apologia-for-child-abuse/>; 'Enough Rope with Andrew Denton: Germaine Greer', *Enough Rope* (ABC TV, 15 September 2003).

## Conclusion

### **'It was good while it lasted': Abuse, Representation, and History**

Ian Brady was front-page news again in 1987, just as Cleveland's child sexual abuse crisis was unfolding. 'As dawn broke at 4.30am' on 2 July, police officers took Brady from his prison cell back to the moorland site of the murders he had committed more than two decades previously.<sup>1</sup> The aim was to elicit from him the whereabouts of two of his victims' burial sites. Middlesbrough's *Evening Gazette* ran it as its headline, front-page story: 'Child-killer returns in handcuffs'.<sup>2</sup> Cleveland – very much the paper's focus over the previous fortnight – was demoted to second billing. In Darlington's *Northern Echo*, too, Cleveland was shifted to the inside pages after eight consecutive days of front-page coverage.<sup>3</sup> What was happening with Brady's reappearance in the local newspapers? The 1980s, as the Cleveland case was proving, were a time of increased focus on child sexual abuse. In one way, Brady's return to prominence felt therefore unsurprising in a climate more closely attuned to awful violence committed against children. Yet the transformed nature of the language used by the *Gazette* in their piece on Brady is also noteworthy. From the sober, defensive, often-procedural local tones of reporting on the Cleveland case that had dominated the pages in prior days, the return of Brady immediately prompted diction that strongly echoed the lyrical representations of 1966. Brady was described as a 'gaunt figure', taken by police in a 'dawn operation', and 'moving slowly down the deep, stony ravine of Shiny Brook and the sweeping peat moor above it'.<sup>4</sup> The *Northern Echo* spoke of police spending months 'sifting through stinking, black peat in their search' for bodies.<sup>5</sup> On a national level, *The Times* described Brady as a 'psychopath' who 'was obviously pleased to tramp the moors with which he had always had a special affinity'.<sup>6</sup> Reading in places like crime fiction, these articles throw over the same sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Smith, 'Girl's Body Identified as Brady Goes Back', *The Times*, 4 July 1987.

<sup>2</sup> 'Brady Is Back On The Moors', *Evening Gazette*, 3 July 1987.

<sup>3</sup> 'Brady Offers to Help: Moors Parents Wait in Agony', *The Northern Echo*, 3 July 1987.

<sup>4</sup> 'Brady Is Back On The Moors'.

<sup>5</sup> 'Brady Offers to Help: Moors Parents Wait in Agony'.

<sup>6</sup> Brady was medically diagnosed as a psychopath in 1985; Smith, 'Girl's Body Identified as Brady Goes Back'.

mysticism and demonology – indeed, in the cases of ‘dawn operation’ and ‘shallow grave’, the very same terminologies – with which Brady and the moorland setting had been conjured in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Brady, unlike the supposed familial perpetrators involved in the Cleveland case, was a recognisable, mythologised folk devil, and was represented as such.

This is a striking example of how the ‘headline’ nature of my case studies means they have collided in the media at ostensibly unlikely moments. But it is also evidence of the ways in which rhetorical tropes endure, or are revisited, even if the temporal, geographical, or broader linguistic milieus have changed. I therefore read these passages as pockets of anachronism. This conclusion lingers on these phenomena as it wraps up the thesis. It proceeds with a reflection on the representational journey this thesis has been on, reviews the major conclusions from my case studies, and sets out the contributions I believe the project makes to scholarship. I then return to Brady and anachronism, and explore the theoretical context of recent revelations about abuse. I consider how the case of Jimmy Savile has shadowed this project, and has opened up important questions about the ways in which historians and other professionals might address ‘historical’ child sexual abuse. Finally, in an epilogue, I reflexively consider the *doing* of this project.

### **Speaking About Speaking About Child Sexual Abuse: Conclusions**

As a reminder of Ankersmit’s maxim, ‘historical text ... is a “speaking about speaking”’.<sup>8</sup> By ‘speaking about speaking’ about child sexual abuse in Britain since the 1960s, this project has sought to contextualise language and to formulate the past both as it was, but more as it was *represented*. It throws light on the way that groups and individuals such as the press and politicians conveyed meaning through language, and also how their audiences interpreted those representations. In this way I have constructed a historical narrative framework of child sexual abuse, and pieced together conclusions about

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Brady Is Back On The Moors’.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 79.

representational and attitudinal change over time. In writing, I observed the way that representation takes two forms. On the one hand are representations of child sexual abuse that are the focus of my case studies – ‘speaking’, or the documentary evidence that I have selected and examined. On the other hand is the ‘speaking about speaking’ – the production of my *own* representation. I have sought to be mindful throughout of the meanings I myself have constructed in the writing of this thesis.

My conclusions are split into three (overlapping) categories: conclusions drawn on a chapter-by-chapter basis; conclusions about a linguistic narrative framework for child sexual abuse, drawn by weaving together the case study findings; and other thematic or disciplinary observations relevant to this thesis in the sense of charting change over time, even if perhaps auxiliary to child sexual abuse. The introduction to this thesis framed the research question at hand: what has been the history of representations of child sexual abuse since the 1960s? It set out the methodological (case-study, largely media-focused approach) and theoretical (representational) groundwork, outlined some of the key current arguments in historiography in other fields, and introduced some of the obstacles I expected to face along the way, such as ethical considerations, anachronism and the challenges of creating my *own* representations on such a fraught subject. The contextual chapter explored in more depth four of the key thematic issues at hand in this thesis: paedophilia, child sexual abuse, the abuser, and the child. I carried out a detailed historiographical review through exploring the definitional histories of these terms, as well as setting the thematic, linguistic and textual grounding for the case studies that followed. My major finding, common to each of these four themes, was that there has been a startling lack of definitional consensus in the UK within and between key fields: linguistic, legal, medical-psychological (biological), socio-cultural (namely in the media) and academic. This has led to regularly incoherent and unhelpful discussions across disciplines and professions. It has indeed been one of the aims of this thesis to document these struggles.

In the first case study I reviewed newspaper and courtroom reportage on the Moors murders from 1965 and 1966. I first looked at common 1960s sexual and media tropes to contextualise the case study. I told the story of the Moors

murders trial of 1966, and found that discussions in the media about sexual crimes against children were broadly couched in metonymical narrative forms, rather than direct expressions or descriptions of abuse. Such forms played on topical fears (particularly perversion, deviancy, sadism and homosexuality) and popular themes (such as public interest in mystery and crime narratives) to represent their stories. In this way, writers and commentators were making legible to audiences acts and events that were otherwise assumed or considered incomprehensible. I suggest that these coded forms were a sign that structures for discussing abuse and the abuser were still liminal.

The second case study focused on the emergence and fall of the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) and associated fraught discussions amongst the press, wider media and in parliament (1974-81). I contextualised the PIE episode by exploring some of the key dynamics in sexual and cultural thought in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the increasing influence of feminism and progressive liberal movements that saw a tight balancing act between the right to freely express sexual views and behaviours on the one hand, and increasing concern for rights of women and children on the other. This meant that groups like PIE were able to put forward their views, but that those views were quickly met with disdain and rejection. A major finding from this case study is that it was the PIE affair *specifically* that brought the term 'paedophile' (as a linguistic construct) into the popular British consciousness – even if at that time it was still heavily associated with homosexual love of 'boys' rather than the more prevalent family 'everyman' who was attracted to girls. In addition, it was PIE members who themselves forced this issue, assigning themselves a paedophile identity. In this way the affair marked a representational watershed in postwar discussions on adult sex with children.

My third case study discussed media, procedural and governmental representations of the Cleveland child sexual abuse crisis of 1987. I documented 1980s discussions on the child, and arguments about the family and state's role in protecting it. Narratives of Cleveland, I concluded, revealed evidence of a developed linguistic and structural concern about child sexual abuse. Institutional change occurred at an accelerated pace in the 1980s, when child protection was engineered in media and government as a grave social



predicament, encapsulated by Cleveland and culminating in the Children Act of 1989. Nonetheless, means of processing the issues were often confused and/or echoed previous coded tropes – particularly in the press. I found that institutions were beginning to struggle with the realisation that abusers tended to be known to victims and usually operated within a family setting, but that this did not put an end to narratives of stranger danger, displaced demonisation of more ‘visible’ threats to the child, or portrayals of paedophiles as external to the family.

Finally, this concluding chapter, as well as summing up findings from the entire thesis, comments on some of the theoretical aspects of writing a history about child sexual abuse. It uses the Jimmy Savile scandal as a way of exploring how current discussions about historical child sexual abuse are formulated and conducted, and restates the manner in which representational study can connect us to historical *meaning* – as well as outlining the pitfalls of anachronism.

These findings support one of this thesis’ major arguments: that it is unhelpful to think in terms of ‘ignorance’ or ‘silence’ and ‘knowledge’ or ‘noise’ when considering child sexual abuse over a longer period in Britain. Since the 1960s, fears and concerns about abuse have existed and been represented in mutable ways – often coded and without use of the more direct labels of today, but also, at times, more clearly articulated and structured. Scholars have made statements or arguments to the extent that ‘it was only in the mid-1970s that there were major shifts in the coverage of child sexual abuse’, and it was only in the same period that ‘paedophiles have been presented as major social threats’.<sup>9</sup> Such conclusions ring true if we tie ‘child sexual abuse’ and ‘paedophiles’ purely to linguistic labels: ‘child sexual abuse’ was not a term I found in 1960s documentation around the Moors murders or any other cases, and the terms ‘paedophilia’ and ‘paedophile’ were not used in courtroom, press or parliament to describe Brady, other suspects, or their proclivities. But we must be careful to delineate *terms* from the *nature* of abuse, and of adults who have been attracted

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<sup>9</sup> Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle, ‘Scandals and Silences: The British Press and Child Sexual Abuse’ (History & Policy, 4 August 2015), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/index.php/policy-papers/papers/scandals-and-silences-the-british-press-and-child-sexual-abuse>.

to children. As I have argued, the latter had been presented as social threats long before the word 'paedophile' became a popular construct.<sup>10</sup> We should also appreciate that the paedophiles being presented as threats in the 1970s were of a quite particular 'sort', being as they were mainly advocate members of organisations such as PIE. Therefore, rather than speaking about the 'emergence' of the paedophile or the 'discovery' of child sexual abuse in the 1970s or 80s, I prefer to point out that those years saw the emergence of those specific *terms*.

And although increasingly direct terminology was circulating by the 1980s, I still observed heavily allusive, metonymical forms and displacements. At Cleveland (and at Rochdale and Orkney), local and national presses reverted to the use of demonic imagery in order to paint actors in the crises in negative ways. Cleveland reflected wider moral anxieties about the state of the nuclear family. The way that doctors were portrayed as outsiders, and even as abusers, seemed to be channelling concern about intrusions on family life and threats to the 'child'. Fears over the breakdown of the family had been observable in earlier timeframes. In the mid-1960s the press related this through denunciations of so-called permissiveness and the sexualisation of adolescents, as well as the threat of stranger danger and homosexuals to the child and family. This tells us that it is not easy to draw teleological conclusions about the way narratives have 'worked' since the 1960s. Representation is complex and inexact, drawing on and shaping anxiety, familiarity, and memory. Whilst we can observe, over the longer period, a more direct approach to the language of abuse, many allusive tropes have remained. As sociologist Frank Furedi has said of Jimmy Savile, 'outrage at [his] behaviour and the wider reaction it precipitated serve as a form of psycho-cultural displacement of concerns about the moral order' – as well as being a forthright rejection of his conduct.<sup>11</sup> I observed this sense of 'displacement' in each of my case studies.

Very often, such displacements were foregrounding homosexuality as a threat to the nuclear family. This was a recurring theme that did not seem to be

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<sup>10</sup> See contextual chapter, 'Who is the Abuser?'

<sup>11</sup> Frank Furedi, *Moral Crusades in an Age of Mistrust: The Jimmy Savile Scandal* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), xi.

tempered by the Wolfenden Report of 1957 or the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967. Indeed, the shift from private to public sexuality made life more anxious and uncertain for many gay people, and long-standing presumptions about homosexuality were not suddenly eradicated elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> My research on the Moors trial, PIE and Cleveland showed, in fact, the deep ongoing association made between homosexuality and paedophilia – an association made quite vocally by PIE members such as Tom O’Carroll. PIE was (self-) represented as being about attraction to young boys, and it was through PIE that ‘paedophilia’ entered popular lexicon.

The linguistic changes that I have discussed occurred in parallel with evolutions in other spheres. Legal and governmental concern about the child was crystallised in inquiries into the deaths of children and child sexual abuse scandals, as well as elevated interest in parliament.<sup>13</sup> Medical and forensic practices also became more cognisant of the child and of child sexual abuse. Academic research on these topics grew exponentially from the 1970s onwards. The arts, too, started to engage with ‘child sexual abuse’ in ways that it had not previously.<sup>14</sup> Britain was not alone in these movements; concern was parallel in the wider Anglosphere, particularly in the United States, as well as European nations such as Germany, France and the Netherlands – although many 1970s liberal commentators still viewed Britain as retrograded on sexual matters.<sup>15</sup>

In the Introduction I discussed the issues of press intention and press influence, querying to what extent the press truly shaped public opinion – or reflected it. Although finding answers to these questions has not been the focus of this thesis, I hope to have been clear throughout that press language may at least be an *indicator* of public opinion (as well as of press opinion itself), and a process through which meaning is both conveyed and created. I observed, when

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Justin Bengry, ‘Queer Domesticities: Matt Cook on Home Life, Family and Community in London’, *NOTCHES* (blog), 26 February 2015, <http://notchesblog.com/2015/02/26/queer-domesticities-matt-cook-on-home-life-family-and-community-in-london/>.

<sup>13</sup> Inquiries into notable cases included Maria Colwell (1973), the Kincora Boys’ Home (1982 and 1984), Jasmine Beckford (1985), Cleveland (1987-88), and Orkney (1991).

<sup>14</sup> See for example the play by John Hopkins, *This Story of Yours* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> For discussions of movements in legal sphere, medical movements, academic research, and on international contexts see contextual chapter.

researching the case studies, a sense of (largely national tabloid and local) press campaign and involvement in stories about child sexual abuse. Bingham has attributed these interventionist changes to Rupert Murdoch's assumption of *The Sun* in 1969.<sup>16</sup> In the current decade, it has seemed clear that media involvement does end up contributing to – or even starting – high-profile investigations.<sup>17</sup> I observed that press language about child sexual abuse told a wider story about the different ways that local (often sober, defensive) and national (exhibitionist, bombastic) media operated – and, over time, how these forms of media were changing. This was encased in the Cleveland crisis, in which local presses were heavily involved and invested at a time when circulations were in decline, the dying embers of a local press campaign culture ahead of the mass advent of online information technology.

In this thesis I have been able to a) construct a narrative linguistic framework of child sexual abuse and b) in so doing, engage with wider questions about whether and how perspectives on child sexual abuse have shifted over time. This thesis intervenes in current histories of British sexuality by tracing these changes. In the way that it affirms the importance of representation, and highlights the challenges of anachronism, this work also contributes to the philosophy of the history of sexuality. Where does this leave the project in the debate on objective, verifiable history on the one hand and subjective flux on the other? The answer, I hope, is somewhere between the two – or rather, a combination of both. The thesis has tried to appreciate the challenges inherent in producing representational and historical analysis (of child sexual abuse), but has also been grounded in 'real' places and events. In a similar vein, I have found that the case study model worked for the reasons that I hoped it would as stated in the overall introduction, in recognising and exploring the interconnectedness between the individual case studies and their contexts.

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<sup>16</sup> Bingham and Settle, 'Scandals and Silences'.

<sup>17</sup> See for example the Jimmy Savile revelations, which became headline news following an ITV documentary after his death, or inquiries into child sexual abuse in English football following investigative reports by journalist Daniel Taylor in *The Guardian* starting in November 2016.

## Time and Anachronism

I wrote in a 2016 blog post that ‘contemporary conversations about child sexual abuse have at their centre a profound relationship between past and present’.<sup>18</sup> Lawyers, legislatures, police, reporters and other groups are currently trying to address revelations about an epidemic of sexual violence in Britain’s recent past.<sup>19</sup> Tony Ward has drawn similarities between such legal processes and historical endeavours; both, after all, are involved with the ‘recoverability of ‘historical truth’’.<sup>20</sup> Gillian Beer has written about the challenge of ‘arguing with the past’ and claimed that ‘we can never become past readers’ because we are so tied to our own subjectivity.<sup>21</sup> Because of this, the prevailing motif in contemporary conversations is that the past has been hidden and victims have always been silent and invisible. Scholars have commented on ‘silences, gaps and empty spaces’ in their attempts to traverse the terrain of child sexual abuse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> But I feel that this is an anachronistic approach. What my research reveals is not historical silences but *codes* that speak in different ways about abuse – ways that might be less accessible or immediately understandable to us now than they were in the past. Today, victims and investigators of sexual abuse are engaging in a type of translation of those codes, using contemporary language to describe and make meaning of past sexual violence.<sup>23</sup>

I argue that anachronistic limitations should be acknowledged when they are encountered.<sup>24</sup> This process will help to contextualise and elevate current-day discourses about (historical) abuse. I have identified two major forms of

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<sup>18</sup> Nick Basannavar, ‘Sexual Violence Against Children in the 1960s’, *NOTCHES* (blog), 21 April 2016, <http://notchesblog.com/2016/04/21/sexual-violence-against-children-in-the-1960s/>.

<sup>19</sup> For examples of multidisciplinary investigations, see Introduction.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Ward, ‘Narrative and Historical Truth in Delayed Civil Actions for Child Abuse’, in *Constructing Crime: Discourse and Cultural Representations of Crime and ‘Deviance’*, ed. Christiana Gregoriou (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43.

<sup>21</sup> Gillian Beer, *Arguing with the Past: Essays in Narrative from Woolf to Sidney* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.

<sup>22</sup> See for discussion Adrian Bingham et al., ‘Historical Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales: The Role of Historians’, *History of Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 426.

<sup>23</sup> Basannavar, ‘Sexual Violence Against Children in the 1960s’.

<sup>24</sup> For example, one imperfection of this thesis, as outlined in the Introduction, is my use of the term ‘child sexual abuse’ itself, given that many of my subjects (such as those reporting on the Moors murders trial) may not have been familiar with such phraseology.

anachronistic behaviours relevant to my historical subject matter as well as current investigatory practices. I term these *interpretive* and *projective*. ‘Interpretive’ anachronism refers to the ways that a historian (or anyone involved in historical investigation) may look to sources or representations from the past expecting to see and interpret terminologies, attitudes and methods that are familiar to their current-day setting. Within this form, there are further textures to consider, as the example of 1987 accounts of Ian Brady demonstrates: namely, the need to be aware, when looking at past representations, that anachronism was occurring in *those* past representations also. Certain linguistic forms remain hegemonic and may become or are anachronistic at later or different stages. ‘Projective’ anachronism, meanwhile, refers to the production (like this thesis) of historical accounts, analysis or representations in our present-day setting in which can be found projections of our current value systems or linguistic constructs onto the past. This form of anachronism occurs in a similar way to subjectivity, in the sense that it is a result of relative contexts. Histories of and investigations into child sexual abuse should show a deep awareness of anachronism, to openly acknowledge it and to discuss what it is doing. This will sharpen understandings. To recall Stuart Hall’s ‘constructivist’ theory of representation, it is after all through representation that we can convey and interpret *meaning*.<sup>25</sup>

Sometimes codes stick, and sometimes they twist. In 1987, as we have seen, the same narrative renditions of Ian Brady from the 1960s were revived – in spite of a supposedly more enlightened arena in which abuse and abusers were visible and knowable. And as I observed in the ‘Epilogue’ to the Moors murders chapter, modern depictions of Brady following his death in 2017 have seen those tropes both being replayed but also evolving, with the word ‘paedophile’ being ascribed to him by some journalists. This is a reflection of that term’s entry into common parlance in the decades since the crimes. Because of this, I believe that had Brady committed his crimes today, the tabloid press in particular would have assigned the descriptor ‘paedophile’ to him far

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<sup>25</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘The Work of Representation’, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall, Culture, Media and Identities (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 25.

more regularly.<sup>26</sup> If meaning is inextricably drawn from language, then the fact that Brady is seldom labelled a 'paedophile' in the press becomes significant. It means that there is less chance of his being *understood* to be a 'paedophile' by observers. The ways in which sexual crimes are discussed and interpreted are therefore dependent on both representational contexts and historical memory. Adrian Bingham and Louise Settle have commented on this process, acknowledging that 'coverage of child sexual abuse is still shaped, and distorted, by many of the assumptions and practices developed in earlier decades'.<sup>27</sup> Particular rhetorical structures endure in cultural memory.

This has sometimes been employed as a deliberate device, particularly in non-press writing. In her 1999 novel *A Place of Execution*, Val McDermid utilised her knowledge of the Moors murders to frame her story of a child's disappearance in Derbyshire. McDermid had worked as a journalist for the *Sunday People* in Manchester and was "very, very aware of the sensibilities and sensitivities that surround a case like this ... particularly where children are concerned".<sup>28</sup> Her novel, telling parallel stories in 1963 and 1998, captures the moorland location of Brady and Myra Hindley's crimes – one passage in the book describes a 'pale winter sun', 'shades of grey', 'darker tones of the barns and houses that dotted the landscape; the flat matt-grey of slate roofs' and 'the dirty grey of moorland sheep' – in a way that recalls newspaper writing and the way that locals received the Moors murders story.<sup>29</sup> McDermid has a keen sense of cultural and historical devices, places and characters, and notes the challenges of 'delving into a past so recent that it is within many people's living memory'.<sup>30</sup> In using historical techniques to craft the novel, accessing local press archives such as the *Manchester Evening News*, McDermid demonstrates the potential richness of fictional speaking about past crimes. She has since indicated that one of her 'most sinister characters' – Jacko Vance, from 1997

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<sup>26</sup> See 'Epilogue' in 'Unspeakable Acts' chapter.

<sup>27</sup> Bingham and Settle, 'Scandals and Silences'.

<sup>28</sup> Ian Youngs, 'Should Crime Authors Mix Fact and Fiction?', *BBC News*, 21 July 2014, sec. Entertainment & Arts, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-28376126>.

<sup>29</sup> Val McDermid, *A Place of Execution* (London: HarperCollins, 2010), 439.

<sup>30</sup> McDermid, sec. Acknowledgements.

novel *The Wire in the Blood* – is based on none other than Jimmy Savile.<sup>31</sup> In a *Daily Star* article from September 2017, an amateur Moors murders investigator alleged that Brady and Hindley had indeed been part of a ‘paedophile ring’ that involved Savile.<sup>32</sup> Journalist Dan Davies, who shadowed Savile for six years to gather information for a biography, noted his subject’s declaration that ‘I AM the Myra Hindley story’.<sup>33</sup> Whether these claims were ‘real’ or not, they reveal the intriguing historical connections between subjects and characters such as Cleveland, Brady and Savile.

### **‘Apocalypse Now Then’<sup>34</sup>**

Such connections echo the way that Savile has been present in this project from the beginning – if not perhaps on the pages (until now), then very much in the planning, thinking and research. The doing of this project has been temporally aligned to the discovery of and investigations into Savile’s behaviour and actions, given that I began research just weeks after the extent of his abuses became public knowledge in 2012.<sup>35</sup> His active years of abuse, too, broadly align with my investigatory timeframes.<sup>36</sup> In this way Savile has been a lodestone for the project. Colleagues and friends of mine assumed that Savile would be one of the primary focuses of the thesis, and forwarded articles outlining comment on and allegations against him as they appeared. I ended up discomfited, unsure of where, why and how to place Savile. A single case study or chapter did not seem adequate to effectively tackle the reams of narrative. He appeared unexpectedly

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<sup>31</sup> ‘I Based Psycho on Jimmy Savile, Says Writer Val McDermid’, *Daily Record*, 30 August 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Tom Evans, ‘Moors Murders: Jimmy Savile Part of “paedo Ring with Ian Brady and Myra Hindley”’, *Daily Star*, 21 September 2017, <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/624549/Moors-murders-Jimmy-Savile-Ian-Brady-Myra-Hindley-paedophile-child-killers-Saddleworth-BBC>.

<sup>33</sup> Neil Mackay, ‘Review: Dan Davies: In Plain Sight - The Life And Lies Of Jimmy Savile (Quercus)’, *Herald Scotland*, 16 August 2014.

<sup>34</sup> This was the original planned title for journalist Dan Davies’ memoir of his time spent with Jimmy Savile: Dan Davies, *In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile* (London: Hachette UK, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> An ITV documentary (*Exposure*), broadcast on 3 October 2012, has been credited with starting the process of widespread disclosure. See Ben Quinn, ‘Jimmy Savile Alleged to Have Abused Girls as Young as 13’, *The Guardian*, 28 September 2012.

<sup>36</sup> The earliest instance of abuse in police records was 1955, Josh Halliday, ‘Jimmy Savile: Timeline of His Sexual Abuse and Its Uncovering’, *The Guardian*, 26 June 2014, sec. UK news, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jun/26/jimmy-savile-sexual-abuse-timeline>.



in newspaper archives when I was researching ostensibly unrelated matters. When conducting press research on the Cleveland case, I came across two local newspaper articles related to Savile's participation in the 1987 Great North Run, an annual half-marathon held between Newcastle and South Shields – very close to the kernel of the child sexual abuse crisis. The first article focused on Savile's training regime. As he

joked with children from Gosforth East Middle School on a class trip ... they laughed as he smooched the hand of teacher [name redacted]. The answer to why he still wants to do marathons is simple to bachelor Jim: "You meet a better class of girl on the road." ... But he wasn't too out of breath to cheekily ask young [name redacted], 15, of Fulwell Avenue, South Shields, and [name redacted], 15, of Fellside, South Shields, "Are you two models?"<sup>37</sup>

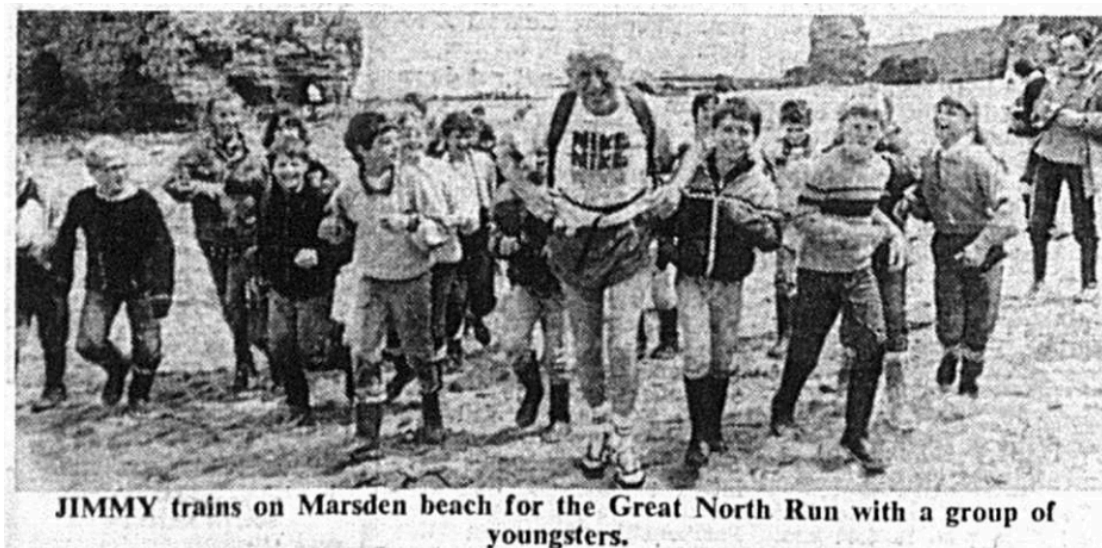
A few days later, Savile joked that "'Marsden beach is a very bad training ground for me because there are too many girls walking about offering me things – but only drinks out of bottles."<sup>38</sup> My immediate response was revulsion – as well as surprise at the simplicity with which I uncovered apparent evidence of his brazenness. The unconcerned – even jocular ('laughed', 'smooched', 'bachelor Jim') – reporting style is perhaps an indication of star-struck local press behaviour. But it also suggests that Savile's predatory method of speaking to (and about) girls and women was somehow unexceptional during that historical moment. The evidence from the Great North Run chimes with popular claims that Savile was 'hiding in plain sight'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> William O'Sullivan, 'As It Happens!', *The Gazette*, 17 June 1987. I have redacted the names of the children here for ethical reasons.

<sup>38</sup> Janice Blower, 'Jim Fixes a Fast One', *The Gazette*, 22 June 1987.

<sup>39</sup> See, for examples of the 'hiding in plain sight' theory Dan Davies' book and title: Davies, *In Plain Sight*; in a 2016 seminar psychiatrist Carine Minne employed a psychohistorical approach in 'diagnosing' Savile: Ray Galloway and Carine Minne, 'Savile: Police and Psychiatry Perspectives' (The Forensic Psychotherapy Special Interest Group, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2016).



**Image 1** <sup>40</sup>

I also came across two educational books that reveal the extent of misplaced trust that was held in Savile. The first (Image 2 below), a 1976 BBC manual, is titled *Other People's Children: A Handbook for Child Minders*, and shows Savile surrounded by young children. The second, from 1985 (Image 3), is titled *Jimmy Savile Introduces Benjamin Rabbit and the Stranger Danger: What a Child Needs to Know About Strangers*. Savile is depicted with a somewhat manic glare at the top of the cover. I was jolted and repulsed on discovering these documents, due to the grim juxtaposition between the books' apparently virtuous purposes and Savile's conduct. He requested that his gravestone be engraved with the message 'It was good while it lasted', almost mockingly suggesting from his burial space that he had gotten away with it.<sup>41</sup> It has been said of Savile that 'the man who dressed like a paedophile was a paedophile' – and even that he dressed like a stereotypical paedophile – 'oddly', with his tracksuits, oversized jewellery, and long hair – precisely so that he would not be considered one.<sup>42</sup> He seemed to play directly into visible notions of stranger

<sup>40</sup> Image reproduced from *The Gazette* 17 June 1987: O'Sullivan, 'As It Happens!'

<sup>41</sup> Carine Minne argues that Savile behaved during his life as if he were inwardly saying to himself: 'look what I'm doing! Why don't any of you stop me?', Galloway and Minne, 'Savile: Police and Psychiatry Perspectives'; 'Jimmy Savile's £4,000 Gravestone to Be Dismantled Following Allegations', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 October 2012.

<sup>42</sup> See discussion of paedophile appearances under 'Who is the Abuser?', contextual chapter. On Savile's dress see Carole Cadwalladr, 'Jimmy Savile by the Man Who Knew Him Best', *The Observer*, 13 July 2014, sec. UK news,

danger that I have explored in this thesis – indeed, he literally wrote the books on it.

Both in his appearance and his manner – not to mention as a strange ‘loner’ who harboured an unusual attachment to his mother – Savile appeared to be the archetype of the dangerous stranger, and yet was seldom called out.<sup>43</sup> He operated in the realm of others’ tacit or latent knowledge. Yet: shocking though the book covers may appear now, Savile was the nation’s most famous children’s television presenter. As journalist Carole Cadwalladr has said, he was the ‘perfect face’ for a book about stranger danger ‘because he wasn’t a stranger’.<sup>44</sup> Was it really such a surprise that his employer (the BBC) would use him for a child-focused publication? Much of the commentary since Savile’s unmasking has focused on collective institutional – and national – ‘failures’ like these examples: failures to spot the signs of his abuse; failures to act when abuse was alleged; failures to *see*. Deborah Orr, writing in *The Guardian* in 2012, suggested that Savile had ‘groomed the nation’.<sup>45</sup> Mackay expressed his view that ‘we gave [abusive celebrities] permission to offend – and that is the ugliest revelation of all’.<sup>46</sup> And novelist Andrew O’Hagan, writing a 2012 opinion piece in the *London Review of Books*, argues that ‘there will always be a certain amount of embarrassment about Savile, not because we didn’t know but because we did’.<sup>47</sup> Such comments indicate ownership of humiliation and collective failure.

O’Hagan here points back towards two common themes: *knowing* and *saying*. ‘It seemed wrong,’ Orr also writes, ‘to think badly of Savile, though many secretly did’.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, if we look at some initial reactions to Savile from 1964

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<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jul/13/jimmy-savile-man-who-knew-him-best-dan-davies-in-plain-sight>; Galloway and Minne, ‘Savile: Police and Psychiatry Perspectives’.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Obituary: Sir Jimmy Savile’, *BBC News*, 29 October 2011, sec. Entertainment & Arts, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15053431>.

<sup>44</sup> Cadwalladr, ‘Jimmy Savile by the Man Who Knew Him Best’.

<sup>45</sup> Deborah Orr, ‘Jimmy Savile Was an Emperor with No Clothes – and a Celebrity Cloak’, *The Guardian*, 2 November 2012, sec. Opinion.

<sup>46</sup> Mackay, ‘Dan Davies’.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew O’Hagan, ‘Light Entertainment’, *London Review of Books* 34, no. 21 (8 November 2012): 8.

<sup>48</sup> Orr, ‘Jimmy Savile Was an Emperor with No Clothes – and a Celebrity Cloak’.

BBC test audiences for his music show *Top of the Pops*, we find palpable disgust and unease:

1 January 1964

‘what an odd looking individual’

‘like a Presbyterian minister’

‘really horrific. It ought to have an X certificate. And there was Mr Savile presiding over the orgy like a Puritan clergyman resurrected from his own churchyard’

29 January 1964

‘Is this Jimmy Savile sane? I must say his most peculiar appearance and manner suggest otherwise.’

10 December 1964

‘this nutcase’; ‘this obnoxious “thing”’; ‘this revolting spectacle’.

‘an abomination’.<sup>49</sup>

On the one hand, these comments may be taken to reflect 1960s ‘suspicion and concern about popular music’s propensity to promote public disorder’, as music historian Martin Cloonan has it.<sup>50</sup> But we can also see that descriptions used about Savile are strikingly similar to those used for the Moors murderers during a similar era. They ‘othered’ the subject, making him ‘odd’, ‘horrific’, a “thing” or ‘abomination’ (or, presumably most offensively of all, a ‘Presbyterian minister’).

Much as 1960s linguistic tropes about Brady and Hindley have been recycled in recent years, the same is true of Savile – see, for instance, the 2013 book that labels him a ‘beast’ in the title.<sup>51</sup> It is also clear that Savile was not hoodwinking everyone: people *did* think him ‘odd’ or ‘weird’ from the beginning. One of Davies’ motivations for writing a biography of Savile was that he was so ‘creeped out’ by his ‘dark and weird and odd’ persona: ‘he was charming, he was charismatic, in a very weird, odd way’.<sup>52</sup> Savile himself, says Davies, relied on ‘the power of oddness’ as a persuasive and beneficial

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<sup>49</sup> Reproduction of quotes courtesy of Billy Smart, University of Reading, in ‘Letters’, *London Review of Books* 34, no. 22 (22 November 2012).

<sup>50</sup> Martin Cloonan, *Popular Music and the State in the UK: Culture, Trade or Industry?* (London: Routledge, 2016), 7.

<sup>51</sup> John McShane, *Savile - The Beast: The Inside Story of the Greatest Scandal in TV History* (London: John Blake Publishing Ltd, 2013).

<sup>52</sup> Cadwalladr, ‘Jimmy Savile by the Man Who Knew Him Best’.

characteristic.<sup>53</sup> ‘Oddness’ has recurred in my research, usually ascribed to perpetrators of sexual violence (such as Brady), paedophiles (members of PIE), or others who seem to pose a threat to the child (social workers at Cleveland) in order to ‘other’ them from the general populace and portray their actions as distant, unknowable, or even unreal. As Cadwalladr has asked of ‘our’ reaction to Savile, ‘have we actually processed the fact that a serial sex offender was at the heart of our culture, our national institutions, for 50 years? Or have we managed to simply write him off as a weirdo?’<sup>54</sup> Her comments critique the historical British inclination to pass off sexual offenders as something outside of capacity for understanding.

Savile has come to shape current historical discussions about child sexual abuse. Retrospective explorations of his crimes mirror, in some respects, what I have done in my case studies here. Savile has *shadowed* this historical project from the outset and cannot be ignored in a discursive analysis of this kind. As writer Neil Mackay has it,

Savile passes through British social history ... the rise of rock and roll, The Beatles, pirate radio, the birth of the charts, the creation of celebrity culture, Saturday afternoon TV, the Thatcher years, the royal family, the NHS.<sup>55</sup>

The media, police, and independent investigations that have looked into Savile’s activities face many of the same challenges as those of historical inquiry. Contemporary discussions about child sexual abuse and paedophilia are channelled through Savile, as if he has become a byword or totem for abuse – and for the failings of institutions to call it out. As Furedi argued in his 2013 book on Savile, ‘the Jimmy Savile scandal is not so much about what a sexual predator did in the past as about how a society gives meaning to its way of life *today*’.<sup>56</sup> The Savile example replays the coded and dynamic ways in which information, feelings, thoughts and persuasions have been represented over

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<sup>53</sup> David Whelan, ‘My Six Years with Jimmy Savile: An Interview with His Biographer’, *Vice*, 11 November 2015, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/vdxxbd/speaking-to-the-man-behind-jimmy-saviles-biography-121](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/vdxxbd/speaking-to-the-man-behind-jimmy-saviles-biography-121).

<sup>54</sup> Cadwalladr, ‘Jimmy Savile by the Man Who Knew Him Best’.

<sup>55</sup> Mackay, ‘Dan Davies’.

<sup>56</sup> Furedi, *Moral Crusades in an Age of Mistrust*, x (emphasis mine).

time, revealing rich ways of thinking and speaking that might go undetected to a modern audience attuned to more direct, structured portrayals of sexual deviancy and sexual violence – and which finds it hard to believe that Savile was not caught before he died. And so, through him, we come back to one of the central claims of this thesis: that it is too simple, and is anachronistic, to posit understanding of child sexual abuse as an evolution from ignorance, denial and silence to knowledge and articulation.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> As Bingham et al. put it, 'historical research challenges teleological assumptions ... that are prevalent within the media and other public narratives: that we know now about abuse but were ignorant in the past, or that abuse is widespread now but was less of a problem in a more benign previous age', Bingham et al., 'Historical Child Sexual Abuse', 428.

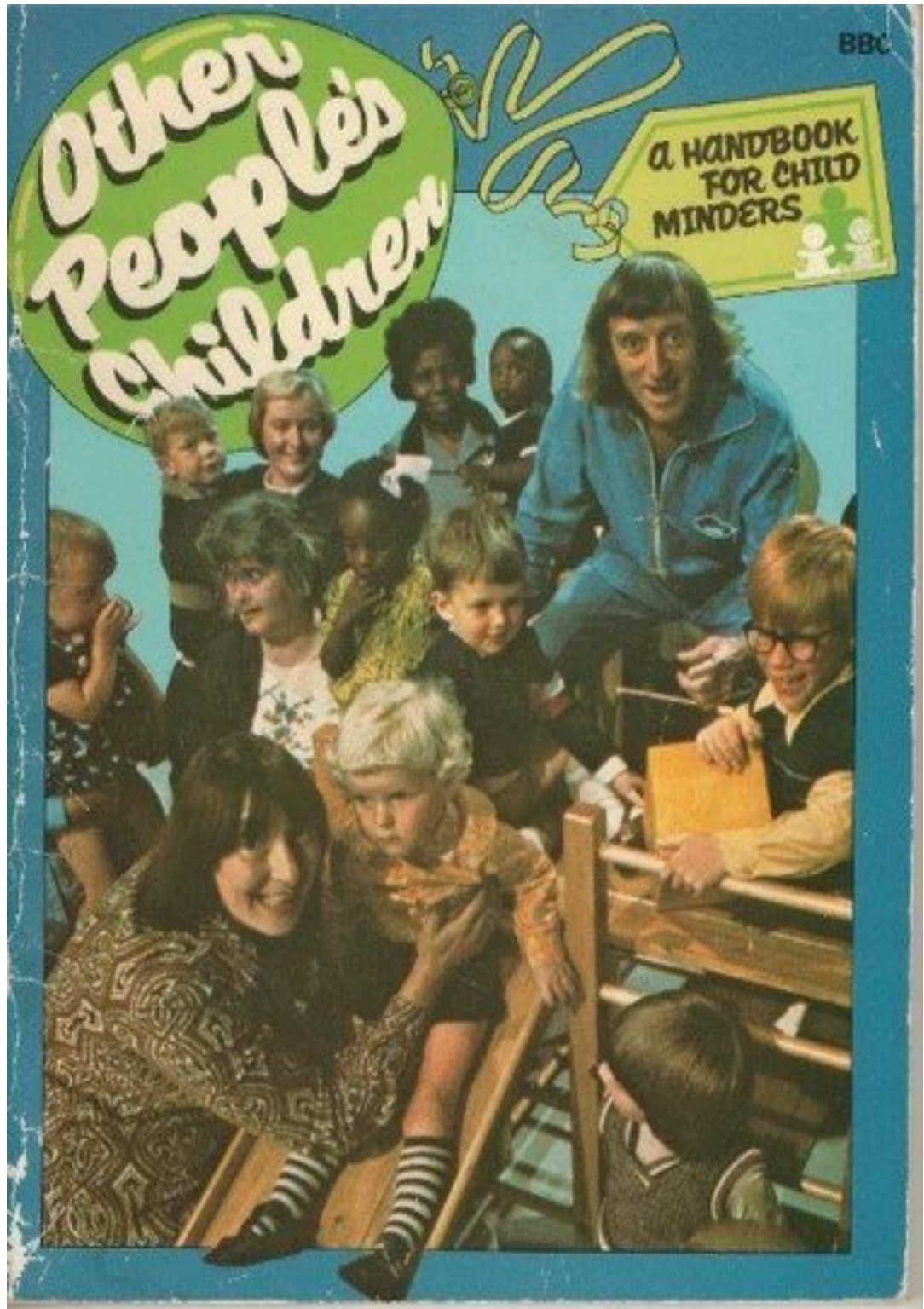


Image 2 <sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Sonia Jackson, *Other People's Children: A Handbook for Child Minders* (London: BBC, 1976); image of front cover reproduced from Amazon.co.uk product listing.



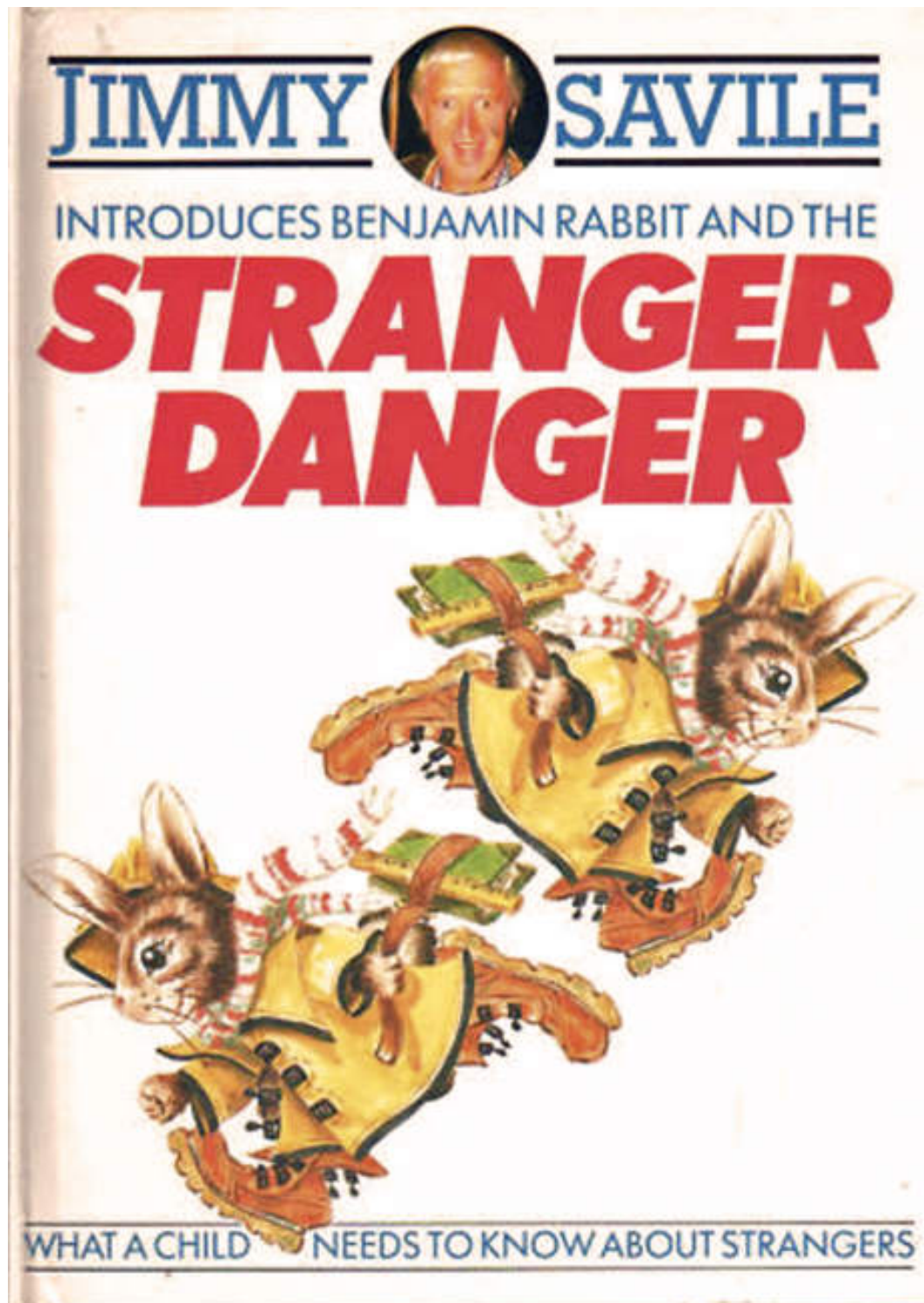


Image 3 <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Irene Keller, *Jimmy Savile Introduces Benjamin Rabbit and The Stranger Danger* (Twickenham: Littlehampton Book Services Ltd, 1985); image of front cover reproduced from Amazon.co.uk product listing.



## Epilogue: 'Doing' the History of Child Sexual Abuse

During the drafting of this conclusion, I decided one evening to take a 'break' by settling down to watch a 2016 episode of BBC police drama *The Line of Duty*. In it, an interrogation is underway. A corrupt ex-police chief is suspected of conspiring to participate in and cover up child sexual exploitation along with several other VIPs, including a rotund local councillor. The ex-chief does not want to help. Then the police put up a photograph (Image 4) that shows him and the councillor greeting a tracksuited, cigar-smoking individual at a charity event. One of the officers asks the ex-chief: "do you recognise the man?"

"I think we all do".<sup>60</sup>



**Image 4** <sup>61</sup>

Savile's appearance – adapted from a real photograph – was unexpected and quite daring in its verisimilitude, particularly given the alleged extent of his sexual offences whilst under the BBC's employment. Just as I was on the verge of completing this thesis came a timely reminder of the prevalence and urgency of

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<sup>60</sup> John Strickland, 'The List', *Line of Duty* (BBC, 21 April 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Picture reproduced from Sarah Hughes, 'Line of Duty Recap: Series Three, Episode Five – a Swift Jab at Operation Yewtree', *The Guardian*, 21 April 2016, sec. Television & radio, <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/apr/21/line-of-duty-recap-series-three-episode-five-a-swift-jab-at-operation-yewtree>.

discussions about and investigations into child sexual abuse; the police investigation in the episode made reference to Operations Yewtree and Midland. It was also a moment reflective of the way that this project has, necessarily, been conducted. Since I started research in 2012, the ability to ‘switch off’ has not come easily to me.

This brief epilogue is a personal comment on the ‘doing’ of the history of child sexual abuse. Like any history, this has been a subjective work. One of the major forms I have considered is ‘emotive’ subjectivity, by which I am referring to the impact of the subject matter on me, the historian. I have read the arguments of pro-paedophile campaigners and seen paedophilic imagery in their publications. I have read many testimonies of victims of child sexual abuse – and of offenders. At times, to say the least, I have wanted to write with less of a ‘filter’ and to express how the crimes or topics I cover have actually made me feel. The cultural critic John Berger wrote in a 2015 work – his last – that ‘language is a body, a living creature ... And this creature’s home is the inarticulate as well as the articulate’.<sup>62</sup> Given that I have sought to carefully frame this project through language, I have been aware of both of Berger’s forms. The need for precision, care and sensitivity has been critical – not least because of the extent to which I discuss the perils of anachronism. Nonetheless, I will surely have been guilty in places of not heeding my own advice. Indeed, when I first started the thesis I *was* viewing things anachronistically – looking at the distant past, not finding terms familiar to me, and drawing reductive conclusions. With support from my supervisor Matt Cook, I was able to refocus my historical lens to search out the representational textures in the sources.

One of the things we observed, given the close connection to journalistic media in this thesis, was the way my writing itself was in places drafted journalistically. I deployed the passive voice and vague concepts and phrases, such as ‘the feelings of the country’ or ‘in wider society’. My own words occasionally mirrored dramatic press language, such as my depiction of a newspaper headline that ‘*screamed* an acceptance that child sexual abuse was no part of public life’, the doctor who ‘*raged*’ to journalists in the wake of Cleveland, or the television presenter ‘*dragged in* by the police’. I speculate that

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<sup>62</sup> John Berger, *Confabulations* (London: Penguin UK, 2016), 5.

I adopted these tendencies as a result of the high volume of journalistic content that I was imbibing, which led to a creeping reductiveness and sensationalism in my own writing. In my oversimplification of complex issues, I was ‘performing’ the tabloid writing that I was analysing.

Another reason for this, however, may be more deeply rooted. As a child and young adult, my career ambition was to become a journalist – not a historian. I edited school and university newspapers, gained work experience at local and national outlets, and I wrote journalistically. These days, I cover the England football team’s fixtures for a radio station. Football is, linguistically, a highly reductive and cliché-ridden arena. So whilst these interests and activities help to explain my interest in press-related histories in the first place, they may also have contributed to the dispositions outlined above.

The presses do not stop. One of my favourite pastimes – reading about current affairs – has become almost an ordeal because of the ubiquitous, disconcerting levels of debate about child sexual abuse. I have suffered, at times, in attempting to keep up with it all during such a seemingly critical discursive moment – particularly given the often-historical focus of press inquiry into abuse. A representational history may one day be written with 2012 and Jimmy Savile’s unmasking the starting point for inquiry. Over these six years, the way that child sexual abuse has been represented has undoubtedly changed. As I have tried to elucidate in this thesis conclusion, I have felt a curious sense of ‘living’ this change. Above all, it was the wish to contribute to – and hopefully elevate – conversations about child sexual abuse that are often frustrating, acontextual and ahistorical that prompted me to undertake this research. That has never wavered.

There has been one other deeply motivating factor in this work – if not a voice that implored me not to give up, then a presence. My father arrived in London from India in the 1950s, enrolling in postgraduate studies in Philosophy at King’s College London. He was never able to obtain his doctorate. And so this really is for him. He later succumbed to Motor Neurone Disease in 2000, when I was thirteen. Completing this thesis has reminded me of one thing: how lucky I was, until that point, to have had the happiest of childhoods.

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